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**"The Fifth Avenue of Richmond":  
The Development of the 800 and 900 Blocks  
of West Franklin Street, Richmond, Virginia, 1855-1925.**

By

Kerri Elizabeth Culhane  
B.A., State University of New York, 1992

Submitted to the Faculty of the School of the Arts  
of Virginia Commonwealth University in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Master of Arts

Richmond, Virginia  
April 1997



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With profound respect, I thank my parents, Roberta and Michael Culhane, to whose wisdom I aspire.

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## **Abstract**

"THE FIFTH AVENUE OF RICHMOND": THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE 800 AND 900 BLOCKS OF WEST FRANKLIN STREET, RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, 1855-1925

Kerri Elizabeth Culhane

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University

Virginia Commonwealth University, 1997

Thesis Director: Dr. Charles Brownell, Professor, Department of Art History

The 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street, Richmond, Virginia were developed during the period of 1855 to 1925. As a result, manifested on these two blocks are important examples of late-Victorian and early twentieth-century American architecture. The predominance of the Second Empire and Richardsonian Romanesque styles indicate that this neighborhood experienced the most intensive building campaign during the 1880s and 1890s. This development corresponds to the period of economic recovery experienced in Richmond after the Reconstruction. Though Richmond suffered economically due to its geographical and political position during and immediately following the Civil War (1861-65), the post-Reconstruction economic recovery made possible financial success for a small number of enterprising Richmonders. Tobacco, trade, and manufacturing were the leading occupations of the financially successful. The original residents of West Franklin Street and their homes are evidence of this prosperity: roughly one quarter made their fortunes in tobacco, one

quarter in manufacturing, one quarter were merchants of one type or another, and the balance were independent business men, lawyers, stockbrokers, and real estate developers. These successful Richmonders chose to erect monuments to their success in the homes they commissioned from local and nationally known architects, builders, and craftspeople. This thesis charts the pattern of social, aesthetic, and architectural development by identifying the patrons, architects, contractors, and craftspeople who built the 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street.

The 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street, comprised in a National Register Historic District, are now largely owned by the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). In 1925, the school began acquiring the old residences and remodelling them into dormitories and classrooms, eventually acquiring 34 out of 42 of the extant original buildings. Consequently, VCU now owns a major intact collection of architectural and historical merit. Though VCU has commissioned master plans and architectural guidelines to guide the development of the growing university, there are no specific guidelines for the maintenance and treatment of the historic buildings. The adoption of and adherence to a university-wide preservation plan is proposed in order to protect this unique and important district.

## Introduction

Virginia Commonwealth University's (VCU's) architectural collection as a whole is comparable to such great American architectural collections as those at Williamsburg, Winterthur, and the University of Virginia. Unlike Williamsburg and Winterthur, the buildings of West Franklin Street retain their original locations and urban contexts; they have not been rebuilt, relocated, or rearranged. Included in the streetscape is architecture from a seventy-year period, ranging from Italianate Villa to Second Empire; from Richardsonian Romanesque to American Renaissance; and, from Colonial Revival to Spanish Eclectic. The variety of styles corresponds to national trends in architecture of the period. Few collections can claim so many intact examples of architecture in their original settings.

In the late nineteenth century, local Chamber of Commerce publications declared West Franklin Street to be "the Fifth Avenue of Richmond."<sup>1</sup> This proclamation in essence equated the neighborhood of the wealthiest people in Richmond with the New York avenue populated by the wealthiest people in America. Few West Franklin Street residents could lay claim to the fortunes amassed and displayed by the New York industrialists in their Fifth Avenue Mansions. The houses and apartment buildings of West Franklin Street are, however, the material evidence of the financial success

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Morrison, ed., Richmond, Virginia: The City on the James (Richmond: Geo. W. Engelhardt, 1893), 57



of a handful of Richmonders in the post-Reconstruction era. The variety in style, the manner in which the buildings were executed, and the locale chosen in which to build, reflect the aesthetic, social, and economic climates of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Richmond. VCU's West Franklin Street collection and its history represents the history of Richmond, 1855-1925.

Despite the historical and architectural significance of this once thriving residential neighborhood, we have not known the most essential historical facts. We have not known the names of the designers, contractors, and craftspeople. In fact, we have not even known the correct names or occupations of the men and women who paid to have these houses built. No research to the present has accurately assigned dates to these buildings. Without such information it is impossible to assert the importance of preserving these two important blocks.

This thesis remedies much of the historical neglect suffered by this important neighborhood. This thesis will chart the social and architectural development of the 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street by establishing accurate dates for the construction of over forty buildings and by providing firm attributions to both local and nationally known architects, contractors, and craftspeople. The names and occupations of those who commissioned and occupied these buildings will also be detailed in order to fully understand how and for whom these important examples of late-Victorian and early twentieth-century American architecture were built. It is hoped that by amending the historical record of the buildings and neighborhood, the foundation will be laid for discrete research into the individual buildings and their integral decorative arts and architectural elements.

Like Jefferson's University of Virginia, VCU faces the challenge of adapting historic structures to modern educational needs. Unlike the pavilions of the University of Virginia that were designed to serve the dual purpose of classroom and lodging for instructors, VCU's buildings were designed as private residences. The earliest uses of VCU's buildings have in many instances, however, been eclipsed by the over seventy-year occupation by what is today known as Virginia Commonwealth University.<sup>2</sup> VCU's historic houses were the first structures acquired by the budding university, and as such are the VCU equivalent to the University of Virginia's Lawn. The 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street form a visual and physical identity for the seventy-two year-old urban campus.

The purpose of this thesis is two-fold. First, this thesis proposes to amend and add to the historical record of the 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street. Second, this thesis presents recommendations for a plan to manage this district in order to protect the physical resources for the future. Chapter One will set the context for West Franklin Street's development by summarizing the historical patterns of growth of Richmond. Included in Chapter One is an examination of the social and economic climate in Richmond after the Reconstruction in order to discern how and why West Franklin Street flourished. Chapter Two examines the styles and types of buildings built on West Franklin Street. The architectural analysis includes a brief discussion of West Franklin Street architecture in comparison with national trends in New York,

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<sup>2</sup> The first incarnation of the University was the Richmond Professional Institute of the College of William & Mary. The name was changed to Richmond Professional Institute (RPI) in 1939, which in turn became the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in 1968.

Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia. A discussion of the architectural practice in Richmond and biographies of local architects who designed buildings on the 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street are also included in Chapter Two. Chapter Three presents a narrative chronology of the physical development of the West Franklin neighborhood. Included are the identities of architectural patrons, residents, contractors, and craftspeople that have been discovered over the course of research.

As a component of this investigation Chapter Four will present a case for the preservation of VCU's historic architectural holdings with recommendations for preservation. Chapter Four will present a review of VCU-commissioned studies that deal with the issue of the preservation of VCU's historic buildings and suggestions for the protection of these important cultural resources.

## Chapter I - Richmond Context

The development of West Franklin Street was prefigured in the historical evolution of Richmond. This chapter will discuss the larger context of Richmond with emphasis on the post-Reconstruction period.<sup>3</sup> Richmond's topographic, economic, political, and social situations all contributed to the rise and eventual decline of this Southern city.

The late nineteenth century in Richmond, Virginia, was a period of recovery and growth. The Civil War had effectively disrupted the agrarian economy of the South and Reconstruction-era Virginia shifted from an agrarian to an increasingly industrial economy. Resulting from this economic shift was a prosperity enjoyed by a select few Richmonders, whose businesses were primarily manufacturing and mercantile-based. As Richmond strove for new economic success, many of its citizens aspired to cosmopolitan status enjoyed by the citizens of major metropolises of the East Coast: New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. Despite its lofty aspirations, Richmond was unyieldingly conservative both socially and politically, a circumstance which hampered its speculative ascent. The city ultimately lacked the economic impetus to drive Richmond into the ranks of first-class cities. Richmond remained conservative and provincial, while towns that rose to meet technological challenges prospered.

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<sup>3</sup> For a thorough discussion of Richmond history see Marie Tyler-McGraw, At the Falls: Richmond, Virginia, and its People (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1994); For a thorough examination of socio-economic issues during the late nineteenth century in Richmond see Michael B. Chesson, Richmond After the War, 1865-1890 (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1981).

Geography also played a crucial role in Richmond's ultimate failure to thrive economically as it had prior to the war. Richmond's fall-line port was easily supplanted by coastal ports accommodating larger sea-going vessels. Richmond was served by as many as nine railroads, but did not connect in a timely manner with national lines.

Richmond's economy followed national trends during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The Richmond housing market was contingent on those trends, as will be illustrated in the discussion of West Franklin Street. The Reconstruction Era effectively ended with the Compromise of 1877, after which the Richmond economy blossomed. Post-Reconstruction Richmond experienced a period of recovery starting in 1878, followed by a recession between 1882 and 1885, and a period of expansive growth until the Panic of 1893.<sup>4</sup> The local rewards of national economic trends were mirrored along the 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street, the development of which coincided with the upswing in the economy. Development along West Franklin Street occurred haltingly until the mid-1880s. After 1888, new construction erupted up and down the thoroughfare. After the Panic of 1893, few houses were constructed. The

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<sup>4</sup> The precise dates for defining the Reconstruction era have been widely disputed. For the general definition as it pertains to Richmond I have chosen Chesson, Richmond After the War, 1865-1890, 197-198. I have supplemented this with C. Vann Woodward, Reunion and Reaction: The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1951), and general information from Hans L. Trefousse, Historical Dictionary of Reconstruction (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1991). Reconstruction era for the purpose of this thesis will be considered the period from the first Reconstruction Acts in March 1867 to the Compromise of 1877.

last houses built during the nineteenth century were begun in 1894, after which no new houses were contracted for until 1907 (Appendix B).<sup>5</sup>

In concert with the positive economic climate, the arrival of the wealthiest man in town, Major Lewis Ginter, guaranteed property values and the prestigious reputation of West Franklin Street as the "Fifth Avenue of Richmond."<sup>6</sup> Ginter's commission of a Washington, D.C., architect to build his house at 901 West Franklin Street (1888-1891/92) encouraged other well-off Richmonders to follow suit. After Ginter, many prospective residents of West Franklin Street commissioned local architects whose work was informed by trends of major cities (Appendix C). The wealthiest patrons imported architects directly from New York or Washington, D.C. (Appendix A - 808, 908-910). Those who could afford to do so showcased their wealth in the conspicuous facades along West Franklin Street.

The 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street remained fashionable for little over two generations. The erection of the Civil War monuments and ensuing development of Monument Avenue quickly supplanted the West Franklin Street

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<sup>5</sup> The several houses that were built in 1894 were likely contracted for prior to the Panic of 1893. Allison House was built during the period of 1894-1896, but the architects and patron were in negotiation and planning stages by 1893. Based on Research in the Allison Papers, VCU James Branch Cabell Special Collections by Ray Bonis and Melissa Zimmerman, Web site, (<http://exlibris.uls.vcu.edu/library/jbc/speccoll/exhibit/pres/papers/allison.html>, 1996).

Ashton Starke had his house remodeled in 1902 (915). In 1903, the remodeling and Colonial Revivalization of Ritter House (821) was begun. The Chesterfield Apartments were built in 1902-1903, marking the shift along the street from single-family residential-scale to higher-density living. 1904, Younger House was remodeled for S.D. Crenshaw (919). The Colonial Revival Myers House (913) was the first residence designed and built on the 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street since the completion of Allison House in 1896, over a decade earlier.

<sup>6</sup> Morrison, The City on the James, 57

address as “most fashionable ” Soon thereafter, Windsor Farms, off Cary Street Road, became the preeminent residential neighborhood Today, westward migration continues farther out into the counties.

The rise and inevitable decline of West Franklin Street figures into the larger development pattern of Richmond as a whole. The continual westward expansion that continues to this day was prefigured in the city’s earliest growth To understand Richmond in the late nineteenth century, one must look at the origins of Richmond and how its historical development actuated westward expansion.

Richmond, Virginia, was established as town in 1742. The earliest Euro-American settlement occurred primarily on bottom-land traversed by Shockoe Creek, a tributary of the James River Richmond was located at the Fall Line, the point at which the river was no longer navigable by deep-water boats. The falls initially inhibited settlement further up the river, and for the four decades until the James River and Kanawha Canal was started, the river hindered expeditious westward expansion and commerce.<sup>7</sup>

Also formidable impediments to Richmond’s immediate expansion were the many hills surrounding the river-bottom. To the east were the steep grades of Church and Union Hills, all but impassible during inclement weather, and to the west lay the slow incline of Shockoe Hill. Despite these natural deterrents to settlement, the town was growing into a city, and more land was needed for expansion. The migration up Richmond’s hills was likely precipitated by the frequent freshets and floods to which the

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<sup>7</sup> See note 3.

creek, river, and bottom were subject. Residential settlement worked its way up Church and Union Hills, while many of the business interests inched westward. The bottom remained the location for many of the industrial concerns, who enjoyed the convenience dumping wastes into Shockoe Creek. Coupled with the run-off from the newly-settled hills, the Creek soon amounted to an open sewer, and, during the summers, the stench of the creek reportedly was unbearable.<sup>8</sup>

Before the war, Richmond enjoyed its status as major manufacturer and industrial center. The holy triumvirate of flour, tobacco, and iron ruled Richmond's economy, creating a wealthy merchant class. By the 1840s, residential expansion was occurring along the major east-west thoroughfares of Franklin and Grace streets west of Capitol Square (Figure 1). This location had the dual advantages to Richmonders of being on high ground out of reach of the James' floodwaters, and within walking distance of the business district and First City Market (17th and Main). Further commercial expansion of the central core of the city pushed exclusive residences west towards the city line, near present day Belvidere in Monroe Ward. Antebellum upper-class residential precincts in Richmond were typically composed of brick Federal and Greek Revival townhouses, in character with the dominant styles of other urban centers along the east coast. Towards mid-century, the Italianate style began to appear in new construction, and quickly predominated.

In 1851 the city purchased land at the western edge of Monroe Ward in Henrico County. Western Square was created as public grounds for the enjoyment of

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<sup>8</sup> Tyler-McGraw, At the Falls, 202.



Richmond's citizens (Figure 2).<sup>9</sup> This action was taken in anticipation of eventual expansion westward. By the 1880s, to relieve some of the crowding and claustrophobia endemic to city life, Richmond City Council designated park and playground space for each of the city's wards, though in a protracted debate more political than practical, a location was never decided upon for Jackson Ward.<sup>10</sup> In acquiring Western Square at the edge of the city, Richmond was creating a foothold in Henrico County. Later expansion would be easily justified when the park became attractive to residential development.<sup>11</sup> In 1853 the Virginia State Agricultural Society inaugurated Western Square as the annual agricultural fairgrounds, guaranteeing its use and potential to attract visitors to the area. In 1855 the fairgrounds were renamed Monroe Square, after the adjacent Monroe Ward. The use of the grounds for exposition purposes were unlikely to attract upscale residential development -- or any residential development -- given the inevitable stench arising from the cattle shows and generally crude nature of the unimproved field.

The square-as-agricultural grounds was supplanted in 1859 by exposition grounds farther west. The new grounds were located near Richmond College, which sat in the far-flung fields of Henrico since 1832. The College was readily accessed from

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<sup>9</sup> A thorough discussion of the events and politics surrounding the development of Western Square into Monroe Park can be found in Drew Carneal, Richmond's Fan District (Richmond: Historic Richmond Foundation, 1996), 68; 70-71. The city also acquired land to the south and east speculatively securing potential routes for expansion.

<sup>10</sup> Kathy Edwards, et al, Monument Avenue: History and Architecture (Washington, DC: HABS, 1992), 8.

<sup>11</sup> Carneal, Richmond's Fan District, 52-55.

Richmond when Franklin Street was extended from Western Square to the College in 1854. Now that the fair grounds were located farther west, and commodious Franklin Street led directly there on axis with the State Capitol, the land along the newly extended east-west thoroughfare became prime real estate for development. The first house to be built between the old grounds and the new was the suburban Italianate Villa of William C. Ritter, just west of Monroe Square on the south side of the street (Figure 3). Also constructed around the same time was a frame house at the southeast corner of Shafer and West Franklin.<sup>12</sup> The Civil War would soon disrupt westward expansion, but the delay would be short lived. During the Spring of 1861, the First South Carolina Regiment of State Troops under Colonel Maxcy Gregg camped and trained in Monroe Square. Soon thereafter, the Square became the site of a makeshift hospital.<sup>13</sup>

Richmond, Capital of the Confederacy, suffered bitterly at the close of the Civil War. The Confederate retreat in April, 1865, left much of downtown a smoldering ruin, destroying all but one of the major mills and laying waste to any and all businesses that might have been plundered by Union troops. Despite the destruction, Richmond was determined to rise from its ashes and regain its prominence. Over the ensuing years, Richmond did refashion a fairly successful economy for itself as a city of the New South, capitalizing on industrial growth that expanded into the South from the Northern

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<sup>12</sup> Mary Wingfield Scott, Old Richmond Neighborhoods, (1950; reprint, Richmond: Valentine Museum, 1975), 172.

<sup>13</sup> W.D. Chesterman, Guide to Richmond and the Battle-Fields (Richmond: James E. Goode, 1884), 45.

states. By the mid-1870s, the Richmond Whig was reporting on the results of this new industrialism.

A new race of rich people have been gradually springing up among us, who owe their wealth to successful trade and especially to manufactures. They are taking the leading place not only in our political and financial affairs, but are pressing to the front for social recognition <sup>14</sup>

Among this “new race of people” would be those who were instrumental in the westward suburban development of Richmond, including the future residents of West Franklin Street. Tobacco processing and manufacture, wholesale provisions dealers, commission merchants and assorted mercantile and manufacturing interests were the main occupations of the residents of West Franklin Street. The other major interest represented was real estate development.

Despite the promise of the New South, Richmond never regained the status it enjoyed prior to the war. A constellation of complications hampered Richmond's return to its antebellum economic success, most notably transportation and technology. The city's port at Rocketts, crucial to Richmond's export industry, was severely silted in as a result of wartime neglect. Advances in ship building allowed the creation of larger boats with a larger drafts that were unable to navigate the James. The city of Norfolk had an excellent deep-water port that was more readily accessible to these larger ships, and could be served by the growing network of railroad lines that crisscrossed the state. By 1881, the coastal port of Norfolk had eclipsed Rocketts at Richmond.

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<sup>14</sup> From the Richmond Whig and Advertiser, 4 April 1876; see also Christopher Silver, Twentieth Century Richmond (Knoxville:University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 19.

Key Richmond industries were unwilling or unable to adopt modern methods of manufacture, testimony to the insular and conservative nature of the city in spite of its espousal of the New South ethic. Tredegar Iron Works was not equipped to handle steel, and would not convert to the more expensive but commercially favored process. As a result, by the Panic of 1873, the once-major factor of Richmond's economy was essentially factored out. Allen & Ginter, the preeminent Richmond tobacco company, refused their option on the Bonsack machine for rolling cigarettes and missed the opportunity to become the preeminent American tobacco company <sup>15</sup>

Despite the setbacks, the city was expanding rapidly, both economically and physically. In 1867, the city of Richmond annexed large portions of Henrico County, extending its western boundaries to present day Lombardy Street. This annexation doubled the size of the city and created prime real estate for speculative suburban development. The short-lived omnibus service inaugurated in 1860 was reinstated by 1867, and the newly relaid tracks extended out Grace Street to Laurel, the Western boundary of Monroe Square, then south on Laurel to within walking-distance of Hollywood Cemetery. The availability of omnibus service encouraged the development of the "street-car suburbs," of the newly-formed Clay Ward. The suburbs were further

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<sup>15</sup> A thorough discussion of the difficulties faced during Richmond's economic recovery can be found in Chesson, Richmond After the War, 1865-1890, 145-168. James B. Duke of Durham, NC took the option on the Bonsack machine, improved it, and helped transform America's chewing and cigar smoking habit into a cigarette smoking habit. Duke formed the American Tobacco Company and eventually bought out Allen & Ginter. Tyler-McGraw, At the Falls, 181-182;190.

cultivated by the eventual adoption of the electric trolley in 1887 <sup>16</sup> New sewer lines and city services were being extended along with new streets, making the West End all the more attractive to those who could afford the modern conveniences of flush toilets and gas and electric service. In the classic pattern of white flight, the outmoded and increasingly commercial inner city was abandoned by middle- and upper-class whites for the fresh new tree-lined suburbs.

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<sup>16</sup> The tracks for the first omnibus service were ripped up and sent to Drewry's Bluff to reinforce Confederate earthworks. Carlton Norris McKenney, Rails in Richmond (Glendale, CA: Interurban Press, 1986), 15;19.

## **Chapter II - The Architecture and Architects**

It is the variation in styles and interpretations of architecture that makes West Franklin Street unique. This chapter will discuss the range of styles present along the 800 and 900 blocks of this once-fashionable thoroughfare. Subsequent to the investigation of the local adaptation of national styles is a series of brief biographies of the Richmond architects whose work appears on West Franklin Street.

The 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street were developed during the period of 1855 to about 1925. The height of construction occurred around the period from 1888 to 1893. As a result, manifested along the street are representative examples of the nationally popular building styles corresponding to their occurrence within the given sixty-five-year time frame. Dominant are the Second Empire and Richardsonian Romanesque styles and variants. Both the 800 and 900 blocks contain a mix of detached houses and detached and attached townhouses. Each quadrant of the four-block area (north and south sides of the 800 and 900 blocks) contains a different style of apartment building: two high-rises, (Monroe Terrace Apartments [Johnson Hall Appendix A - 801] and The Chesterfield [900])(Figure 4), and two small scale apartment houses (Franklin Terrace, [Appendix A- 812-14] and Berkeley Apartments [Scherer Hall, Appendix A - 923]).

The domestic residences all exhibit similar scale, being two-and-one-half to three stories in height, generally three- or five-bays across, and of a fairly uniform

set-back, particularly the townhouses of the 900 block. Typically, the townhouses are of three-bay, side-hall configurations extending deep into their narrow lots (Appendix A - 810, 820, 912, 914, 917, 919, 920, 921, 922), while the larger detached houses are either symmetrical, five-bay, center-hall form (Appendix A - 806, 821, 827, 901, 910; Figure 27), or asymmetrical dwellings on free plans, with rooms radiating from a living hall (Appendix A - 800, 808, 826).

The popularity of particular styles during specific periods of development is made evident when one accounts for the many houses that have been demolished, relocated, or remodeled over the years (Appendix B). Beginning in 1855 with the Italianate Villa at 821 West Franklin Street (Appendix A - 821 [Figure 3]), the Italianate idiom was continued through to the early 1870s with the Williams House (demolished ca 1924 [Figure 5]). The Second Empire was initially represented on the street by the frame house at 801 (1871, relocated 1915, destroyed 1997 [Figure 6]), which may have inspired later manifestations of the style. Other examples of the style are 811 West Franklin Street (ca 1880; demolished 1950s), 806 West Franklin Street (1881-1883 [Appendix A - 806]); and 820 West Franklin Street (1886 [Appendix A - 820]). The mid-1880s brought a mixture of styles, including the Queen Anne Style at 816 West Franklin Street (1887-1888 [Appendix A - 816]), the Gothic-inspired 915 West Franklin Street (1885, remodeled 1902 [Appendix A 915]), and a return to the Italianate at 917 (1887-1888) and 922 West Franklin Street (1888-1889)(Appendix A - 917, 922).

In 1887, T H Ellett commissioned a townhouse from local architect Marion J Dimmock. The house, apparently in the Richardsonian Romanesque style, was built

at 807 West Franklin Street. Around the same period, W G. Stokes commissioned a house from Carl Ruehrmund in the same style.<sup>17</sup> The following year, Major Lewis Ginter's decision to commission a house (1888-1891/92; Appendix A - 901 [Figure 7]) in the Richardsonian Romanesque style from Washington architect Harvey L. Page triggered a wave of new house construction after 1888. Based on heavy lithic forms and Syrian arches, the influence of the Ellett, Stokes, and Ginter houses infused current architectural idioms into a neighborhood that had until recently been building in the waning Second Empire style.

It was not until the 1890s that Richmond's contemporary architecture became something of note, undoubtedly influenced by Major Ginter's architectural patronage and the growth of Richmond-based professional architectural practices. A number of local architects received training outside of the city, in Washington, Philadelphia, New York, and beyond, bringing to Richmond some of the current styles of major American cities. Some achieved greater success than others. Many of the works of these architects are located on West Franklin Street, alongside work by New York and Washington architects (Appendix C).

The oldest practicing architect in Richmond in the 1880s and early 1890s was Albert L. West (1825-1892). West had served as an architect and engineer for the Confederate army in Atlanta. In civilian life, he was the designer of a number of ecclesiastical buildings in Richmond and far afield, in Japan and Nigeria. His Richmond

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<sup>17</sup> Richmond, Virginia and the New South (Richmond: Geo. W. Engelhardt & Co., 1888), 26; Richmond, Pride of Virginia: An Historical City, (Philadelphia: Progress Printing, 1900), 95; Morrison, The City on the James, 59.



work included civic, commercial and residential designs. West was elected as a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1890 <sup>18</sup> West designed the Stagg and McAdams houses at 912 and 914 West Franklin Street (1891), and was probably responsible for the Grant-Buford House at 922 West Franklin (1888-1889 [Appendix A - 912, 914, 922]) Upon West's death in 1892, he was succeeded by his son, William C. West. <sup>19</sup>

Second to the elder West in seniority was Captain Marion J Dimmock (1824-1908). The 1893 Chamber of Commerce book attested that "the architecture of [Richmond], indeed, bears everywhere the impress of his constructive and artistic talent."<sup>20</sup> Dimmock's work included buildings of ecclesiastical, civic, commercial, industrial and residential use Dimmock was made a Fellow of the AIA in 1888, and was elected to serve a one-year term on the board in 1891 <sup>21</sup> The Jones-Williams House at 800 West Franklin Street (1890-1891) was designed by Dimmock. Dimmock is one of the most important figures in late nineteenth-century Richmond architecture His influence was felt not only through his own work, but for his role in training younger architects, such as C.K. Bryant (c. 1872-c. 1935) and Duncan Lee (1884-1952) <sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> History and Directory of the College of Fellows. Washington, DC: AIA Press, 1992.

<sup>19</sup> Morrison, The City on the James, 58.

<sup>20</sup> Morrison, The City on the James, 56.

<sup>21</sup> History and Directory of the College of Fellows; Proceedings of the 26th Annual Convention of the American Institute of Architects. Chicago: Inland Architect Press, 1893, n. pag.

<sup>22</sup> "Architecture in Richmond," Architects and Builders Journal (Feb. 1901), in the Valentine Museum "Richmond Architects" file. See also Morrison, The City on the James, 56.

Dimmock was the only Virginia architect whose work was published consistently in the trade journal, American Architect and Building News.<sup>23</sup>

A friend of Dimmock's was another major figure in Richmond architecture, Charles H. Read, Jr. (1846-1904). Read was a Richmond native. His father, the senior Charles H. Read, was a Yankee preacher from Connecticut who became a prominent Confederate convert and sympathizer. The junior Read served in the Confederate army during the Civil War, then studied engineering at the University of Virginia. After many years in Washington, D.C., first in the office of the Supervising Architect, then in private practice, Read returned to Richmond in 1889.<sup>24</sup> Read brought to Richmond a talent for the Richardsonian Romanesque. Read's Planter's National Bank (1894 [Figure 19]) at Main and 13th Streets could easily be mistaken as a work by the hand of Richardson himself. A freer interpretation was Read's design for the Strause-Blanton House, built in 1892 (Appendix A - 826, Figure 20).

Another Richmond architect who had worked for the U.S. government in Washington was German-born and trained Carl Ruehrmund (1855-1927). Ruehrmund's Richardsonian Romanesque was perhaps tempered by the Germanic influence of the architect's training at the Royal Academy in Berlin. Full curves and round arches are hallmarks of Ruehrmund's work, which appears to exhibit the

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<sup>23</sup> David Thompson, "The American Architect and Building News and Virginia, January 1881-December 1895," Term Paper, ARH 489. School of Architecture, University of Virginia, 1988.

<sup>24</sup> "Architecture in Richmond."

influence of the germanic Rundbogenstil.<sup>25</sup> Ruehrmund came to Richmond in 1884. The extant Ruehrmund design on West Franklin Street is the Stokes House (1888-1889), 918 West Franklin Street (Appendix A - 918). Ruehrmund had been in a brief partnership with another successful local architect, Albert F. Hunt, from 1892 to 1895.<sup>26</sup>

Albert F. Hunt (1868-1920) was responsible for a number of residential buildings as well as warehouses for the American Tobacco Company and schools sprinkled throughout the United States. Hunt, a native Richmonder, received his training in architecture and engineering from the Pennsylvania Military Academy (variously cited as Pennsylvania College).<sup>27</sup> Hunt worked in Philadelphia for four and a half years before returning to Richmond. Hunt's design for 921 West Franklin Street (Appendix A - 921) was built for shoe-magnate Stephen Putney in 1894.

The partnership of C.K. Bryant and Benjamin W. Poindexter was formed 1 May 1892.<sup>28</sup> Poindexter (c. 1865-?) and Bryant (c. 1872-c. 1935) were two of the youngest architects practicing in Richmond during the 1890s. Although Poindexter's precise age was unknown, Bryant was only about twenty at the time he entered into the partnership. Bryant trained under Captain M.J. Dimmock before forming the

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<sup>25</sup> Janet Murphy, "Albert Lybrock, Carl Ruehrmund, and the Influence of Nineteenth-century German Architecture in Richmond," Abstracts of the 1994 Architectural History Symposium (Richmond: Virginia Commonwealth University, 1996), 18-19.

<sup>26</sup> "Albert F. Hunt," American Journal of Progress (1898), The Valentine Museum "Richmond Architects" file.

<sup>27</sup> "Architecture in Richmond."

<sup>28</sup> Morrison, The City on the James, 58.

partnership with Poindexter Poindexter and Bryant dissolved the partnership by 1895, after which Bryant accepted a position in the Office of the Supervising Architect in Washington D C.<sup>29</sup> Poindexter remained working in Richmond, starting his own practice in 1899 Much of his work was church-related<sup>30</sup> One known residential design of Poindexter's is the house designed for the widow of J R. Anderson, Mary Pegram Anderson The house, 920 West Franklin Street (Appendix A - 920), was built in 1893-1894

By far the most prolific partnership, as far as West Franklin Street is concerned, was that of William C. Noland (1865-1951) and Henry E Baskervill (1867-1946) Noland was a native Virginian who received his training in Philadelphia, New York, and Europe.<sup>31</sup> Baskervill was a native Richmonder who received his training in the engineering department at Cornell Baskervill worked for the City of Richmond under City engineer Colonel Wilfred Emory Cutshaw before undertaking the partnership with Noland<sup>32</sup> Noland and Baskervill's entry into the West Franklin Street scene came as consulting architects on the Muhlenburg Brothers' Chesterfield Apartments (900 West Franklin Street, 1902-1903 [Figure 4]). Along with the Chesterfield, Noland and Baskervill were employed in the renovations for Ashton Starke in 1902 (Appendix A -

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<sup>29</sup> Henry F Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects, Deceased (1956; reprint, Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1970), 86.

<sup>30</sup> "Architecture in Richmond, Va."

<sup>31</sup> "Architecture in Richmond, Va." and Christopher Vincent Novelli, "William C. Noland and Residential Design of Richmond's West Franklin Street" (Master of Architectural History thesis, University of Virginia, 1996).

<sup>32</sup> "Architecture in Richmond, Va."

915) and S D Crenshaw in 1904 (Appendix A - 919). In 1904, Temple Beth Ahabah was built from Noland and Baskervill's competition designs. The first house commission was a design for Frederic W Scott (909 West Franklin Street, 1908-1911 [Figure 27]) starting in 1906. In 1907, a house was designed for E T D , Jr and Grace Myers at 913 West Franklin Street (Appendix A - 913) In 1909, a widow, Caroline C Wise commissioned the firm to design a small-scale apartment building at 923 West Franklin Street (Appendix A - 923), the Berkeley Apartments.<sup>33</sup>

In contrast to the progressivism in architecture and business, the cult of the Lost Cause that rose up in the 1880s rather enthusiastically mourned the antebellum past. The "Victorian pyrotechnics" exhibited in the various facades of West Franklin Street became much maligned as monstrous and hideous exaggerations of architecture. Victorianism was seen in retrospect as a messy interlude between the staid traditions of the first half of the nineteenth century and the Colonial Revivalism of the early twentieth century.<sup>34</sup>

The progressive Chamber of Commerce and other civic boosters, however, tried to balance the reverence for history with the desire for economic success by

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<sup>33</sup> Harwood Report, Scherer Hall/Berkeley Apartments File, James Branch Cabell Special Collections, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia. The deeds for 923 West Franklin Street are reproduced in the Harwood Report, and provide the names and dates for the acquisition and transfer of property. A drawing for the apartments by Noland and Baskervill, dated November 1909, was found among the building permits in Richmond City Hall, though no permit has yet been located (Figure 28).

<sup>34</sup> "Victorian pyrotechnics" is a term used by Richard Guy Wilson in, "Monument Avenue, Richmond, Virginia," The Grand American Avenue, 1850-1920, Edited by Jan Cigliano and Sarah Bradford Landau (San Francisco: Pomegranate Art Books, 1994), 271-79; See also Mary Wingfield Scott, Old Richmond Neighborhoods, 175. Scott, writing in 1950, described the Victorian period of "costly monstrosities" as one of "bad taste," and Franklin Street architecture in particular as "expensive and pretentious."

promoting the historic interest of Richmond along with the economic potential of the modern built city. Richmond boosterism influenced promotion of the current architectural vogue as the city sought to establish itself as a cosmopolis and attract northern and foreign business interests. At first, the new Victorian architecture of Richmond is seen in contrast with the earlier traditions. The 1888 publication Richmond, Virginia and the New South discusses the rising profitability of the real estate and mortgage business, "especially since the homebuilders have been seized with the desire for more pretentious architecture and betterments -- the notable features of all later construction here"<sup>35</sup> In ensuing newspaper articles and glossy Chamber of Commerce publications, the new architecture in the west end is touted as the manifestation of the city's success.

An evidence of progress and prosperity is the long lines of private residences which year after year supplant less worthy structures or fill ugly spaces in 'the old fields.' With few exceptions, they represent money made in Richmond, while they display the skill of our architects and the handicraft of our mechanics, and the richness of our locality in beautiful building materials.<sup>36</sup>

One year later, the Richmond Dispatch was still singing the praises of the city's residential development, when under the headline "Solid Growth," the 1 January 1891 edition effused

Some splendid residences have been erected within the past twelve months. We have homes that are architectural models for the land. Lines of nice houses are marching westward to the Boulevard. All

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<sup>35</sup> Richmond, Virginia and the New South, 72.

<sup>36</sup> Richmond Dispatch, 1 January 1890: 1

these costly buildings represent money made in Richmond the visible evidence of business prosperity [and] the best possible proof that Richmond is a city wherein large fortunes can be made<sup>37</sup>

The local boosters went so far as to declare West Franklin Street to be “the Fifth Avenue of Richmond”<sup>38</sup> In reality, Richmond’s “Fifth Avenue” was a diminutive version of the elite neighborhoods populated by wealthy industrialists and merchants developing in other major cities. Richmond aspired to be cosmopolitan, but the new “palatial residences” on West Franklin Street were principally facades. The new residences were a great deal smaller than even the antebellum residences of Richmond. Often the interiors were cramped clusters of small rooms. That Richmonders would chose to build these homes had as much to do with architectural vogue as with the desire of the residents to display their wealth in monuments to their economic success. Consequently, emphasis was often put on the showy facades, while some interiors featured only a select few decorative elements. West Franklin Street was the setting for the Sunday parade of churchgoers, and later served as the Confederate reunion parade route from the Capitol to the Lee Monument.<sup>39</sup> The facades were all most Richmonders ever got to see, hence the emphasis placed on their decoration.

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<sup>37</sup> Richmond Dispatch, 1 January 1891 1

<sup>38</sup> Morrison, The City on the James, 59.

<sup>39</sup> Scott, Old Richmond Neighborhoods, 175. “Southern Society and Its Leaders,” Everybody’s Magazine, ca. 1904. In James Branch Cabell Special Collections. See also Bonis and Zimmerman. Web Site, 1996. pp 5-6.

As in any neighborhood, certain interiors were more richly decorated than others. All of the interiors, however, contained (and still retain) important examples of period decorative arts and fixtures. Art glass, tile, woodwork and other crafts were the primary embellishments in the late-Victorian interiors. At least three residents of the 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin were owners of building materials and interior finishes businesses, establishing sources for further research into the interior decoration <sup>40</sup>

Resulting from the decades of development along West Franklin Street is an eclectic ensemble of Victorian and post-Victorian American architecture. The houses were built for the few Richmonders who prospered in the post-Reconstruction economy and who, more often than not, figured prominently in the city social registers. The following chapter will focus on the chronological development of the street and include a biographical profile of the men and women who commissioned the various buildings constructed.

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<sup>40</sup> Among the recent studies of VCU's buildings are: Dana Cline, "Architectural Ceramics in the West Franklin Street Historic District," Report, ARH 789 (Virginia Commonwealth University, 1996); Lee Anne Hurt, "The Art Glass in the Virginia Commonwealth University Houses on the 800 and 900 Blocks of West Franklin Street," Report, ARH 789 (Virginia Commonwealth University, 1996); John Hubenthal, "Four Firebacks," Report, ARH 797 (Virginia Commonwealth University, 1994), and "The Cast Iron Fireplace Decoration of the McAdams House, Virginia Commonwealth University," Abstracts of the 1994 Architectural History Symposium (Richmond: Virginia Commonwealth University, 1996), 11-12.



### Chapter III - Narrative Chronology

Franklin Street just west of Capitol Square had been a fashionable address for decades prior to the extension of the street past Monroe Square. What is today the 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street, however, was pastoral Henrico County when the first houses were constructed in 1855.

William C. Ritter, listed in the 1854 Richmond directory as an upholsterer in the city, chose to build a house in the Italianate Villa style popularized mid-century by A.J. Downing's influential writings (Figure 3, Appendix A - 821).<sup>41</sup> This picturesque style was not suited to the urban quarters of Richmond, but harmonized with its rural environment. Ritter's brick house was two-stories high, single pile, on a center-hall plan. The house was three-bays across, with a slightly projecting central bay and cross gable, with a cornice brackets. An entry portico was supported by Tuscan posts from which were launched round arches. Decorative window frames, some surmounted with scroll-work, adorned the facade. Ritter resided in the suburbs until ca. 1868 when

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<sup>41</sup> While Downing was responsible for popularizing the Italianate Villa style in his books, Cottage Residences (1842), and Architecture of Country Houses (1850), others were promoting the style in their own pattern books. Drew Carneal has cited a possible design source for the Ritter House; Samuel Sloane's The Model Architect (1852) illustrates a single-pile gable-end house with projecting cross-gable. The fenestration of Ritter House compares favorably with that of the Sloane illustration, though Ritter's architectural detailing was something less extravagant than the Sloane version. Carneal, Richmond's Fan District, 56-57

Samuel Harwood, of Harwood & Ritter, furniture and upholstery, acquired the house<sup>42</sup> By 1881, real estate mogul and developer R.B. Chaffin was in residence, and remained so until the turn of the century For several years Ritter's closest neighbors were John C. Shafer, the successful merchant tailor, at 900 Park Avenue (ca 1817, demolished 1895 [Figure 8]), and James B. Taylor, secretary of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, who occupied a frame house at the southeast corner of West Franklin and Shafer Street (ca. 1855, style unknown, demolished ca 1883).<sup>43</sup>

A gradual westward migration brought at least three other settlers to the area over the ensuing twenty years. Although two of the buildings are long gone and no record of their precise dates and styles has been located at this time, one was described as a white, "old style" frame dwelling at 900 West Franklin Street that predated the building boom of the 1880s.<sup>44</sup> This "old-style" house sheltered a number of residents until it was sold ca 1900 to the builders of the Chesterfield Apartments (1903, Muhlenburg Bros. with Noland & Baskervill [Figure 4]). The house was relocated in order to erect to seven story apartment building on its site The Chesterfield became the first large-scale, non-single family dwelling on the street.

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<sup>42</sup> City directories for 1870 indicate that Harwood's partner was Richard C. Ritter, and William C. Ritter disappears from the directories after the sale of the house. Given the varying accuracy of the directories of the period, no conclusions have been drawn from the available information.

<sup>43</sup> Scott, Old Richmond Neighborhoods, 172. Carneal, Richmond's Fan District, 55.

<sup>44</sup> Ella Williams Smith, Tears and Laughter in Virginia and Elsewhere (Verona, VA. McClure Press, 1972), 5. According to Mr. Bruce Koplin, Chairman of the Department of Art History, VCU, the house that stood at 900 West Franklin was relocated to 1115 West Avenue ca. 1902. The house at 1115 corresponds to the description of the house formerly on the Chesterfield site. Further research into this possibility must be undertaken to substantiate the oral history

The other "pre-boom" house was an early dwelling at 816 West Franklin Street bought ca. 1869 (possible ca. 1873) by T. C. Williams, Sr. Williams was to become one of the most successful tobacco barons of Richmond, and the Williams dynasty would figure prominently along West Franklin Street and beyond for decades to come. Williams started his career as a clerk for J. Thomas, Jr., tobacco manufacturer. By the time he relocated to West Franklin from his home at the northeast corner of Franklin and Third, he was the owner of his own tobacco manufacturing enterprise. The earlier house (n.d., style unknown) was transformed by Williams into a large Italianate house that stood until ca. 1924.<sup>45</sup> The Williams House (Figure 5) was a typical example of the mid-century Italianate detached dwelling. It stood three full stories, three bays across, with a low-pitched hipped standing-seam metal roof topped with a square cupola. The brick structure included interior end chimneys, bay windows to the west and cast-iron galleries to the east. A one-story cast-iron porch spanned the width of the house, architrave-form window crowns were supported by brackets, and modillion blocks and dentils were used on the main cornice as well as on the cupola. The house remained in the Williams family until the turn of the century, when Ella, William's widow took ill and moved along with T. C. Williams, Jr., to 824 West Franklin Street (1889-1891, demolished 1937 [Figure 9]). Mrs. Williams died in residence at 824 in November, 1902.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Smith, Tears and Laughter, 5.

<sup>46</sup> Smith, Tears and Laughter, 24.

A close contemporary of the Williams House was the Second Empire-style frame dwelling formerly located at 801 West Franklin Street (Figure 6). It stood at the southwest corner of Franklin and Laurel, across the street from Monroe Square. Colonel Albert Ordway, the builder of the house, was a Yankee who became prominent in local politics when he was appointed to the City Council in 1869. It was Ordway who was ultimately responsible for the transformation of Monroe Square into a landscaped park through his lobbying efforts to enhance the public square. Ordway argued in 1869 that the grounds had potential to attract the development the city had originally desired for the area, and that the city owed it to those holding depreciating land in the environs of the deteriorating square to improve the land for the sake of tax revenue.<sup>47</sup> As Ordway continued to champion this cause, in 1870 he purchased the property on which he built his house in anticipation that the City Council would adopt his recommendation. In 1871 the grounds were graded, paths were laid out, and trees planted.

Ordway's campaign for Monroe Park was successful, though he would not prove to be, eventually losing his house to foreclosure in 1875. The foreclosure may have been precipitated by a major over-calculation on the part of Ordway when in 1871, he bid on a contract to supply the U S Government with granite facing for the soon-to-be erected State, War and Navy building in the nation's capital. Ordway was the lowest bidder of the Republican persuasion and thus was awarded the contract. The contract, however, proved too much for Ordway to handle. Over the next two

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<sup>47</sup> Carneal, Richmond's Fan District, 71-72.

years, his quarry consistently failed to produce the product in a timely manner. Coupled with labor issues and transportation set-backs among other problems, by late 1872 his quarry business fell into bankruptcy.<sup>48</sup>

The house was bought by Charles R. Skinker, partner in the firm Hill, Skinker, and Watkins, fertilizer agents, special commission merchants and proprietors of the Centre Warehouse, 1412-1416 East Cary Street. Skinker lived there a number of years until the house was relocated to Chamberlayne Avenue in 1915, to make way for the Monroe Terrace Apartments (1915, Alfred C. Bossom, architect [Appendix A - 801]). The Ordway-Skinker House was destroyed by fire in 1997.<sup>49</sup>

Around 1880, another Second Empire style dwelling was erected to the west of the Ordway-Skinker residence. Jeremiah Judson (J.J.) Montague was described in 1908 as "a gentleman of the old school."<sup>50</sup> A manufacturer of sashes, blinds, and doors, Montague's wholesale lumber and manufacturing business was undoubtedly buoyed by the residential building boom occurring in Richmond during and after the Reconstruction period. The business was founded in 1865 and flourished in response to the need for construction materials after the burning of Richmond. By the early 1890s, Montague's business was taking in over \$150,000.00 annually. Montague was

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<sup>48</sup> J. Laurie Ossman, "Reconstructing a National Image: The State War and Navy Building and the Politics of Federal Design, 1868-1890" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1996), 115-139.

<sup>49</sup> Jim Mason, "Chamberlayne house burns," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 7 January 1997: B1.

<sup>50</sup> Lyon G. Tyler, Men of Mark in Virginia, vol. 5 (Washington, DC: Men of Mark Publishing, 1908), 294.

featured in the Men of Mark in Virginia series, in which he was listed as President of Lyon & Montague, wholesale lumber, Vice-President of both the Southern Biscuit Works and William R. Trigg Shipbuilding, a member of the Richmond Locomotive Works, and a Knight Templar Mason. He also served along with neighbor Lewis Ginter on the board of Planter's National Bank. He was married to Kate S. Warren in 1867. One of Warren's in-laws, Luther R. Warren, an insurance adjuster for Virginia Fire and Marine Insurance Company, lived in the Montague House.<sup>51</sup>

The Montague House at 811 West Franklin can only be described from what few pictures exist, though it appears to have been a brick, two and one-half story Second Empire townhouse, three bays across, with dormers and roof cresting (Figure 10). Stonework for the house was executed by local general stone contractors, Mason and Sim.<sup>52</sup> The house was one of several demolished by Richmond Professional Institute (RPI) for new construction in the 1950s.

In April 1881, Sylvanus C. Blanchard acquired land on West Franklin Street from James H. Dooley, then placing a deed of trust on the property with soon-to-be neighbor R.B. Chaffin (of 821 West Franklin Street).<sup>53</sup> Blanchard was a wholesale grocer whose business on South 14th Street was located in the heart of Richmond's commercial district. Many of his business neighbors would soon become residential neighbors, but Blanchard and his wife Abby apparently did not live on West Franklin

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<sup>51</sup> Tyler, Men of Mark, vol. 5, 290-294, Chataigne's Richmond City Directory for 1881 (Richmond: Baughman Bros., 1881).

<sup>52</sup> Morrison, The City on the James, 171

<sup>53</sup> Deeds of Trust, the Chaffin Family papers, Virginia Historical Society

Street for long, if at all. The city land tax record of 1882 indicates that Blanchard had made \$4,000 00 worth of improvements to the property the previous year, but that the building was yet unfinished. In 1883, the tax record shows that improvements made during the year increased the value of the building to \$18,000 00, and that the land and improvements were assessed at \$22,800 00. By contrast, the completed Montague House (811 West Franklin Street) was valued at a mere \$4,000 00, and the land and improvements combined were valued at \$6,040.00.<sup>54</sup> The result of such a major expenditure was a large detached house in the Second Empire style, (Appendix A - 806), the first "mansion" to grace this part of West Franklin Street.

Though the house had been completed by 1883, in 1884 the house was sold to Whitmell S. Forbes, who purchased it in trust for his wife, Anna. The recession may have forced Blanchard to sell the large house. Blanchard occupied a more modest house on Laurel Street. Forbes resided on West Franklin until 1909, when the house was sold to William H. White for \$40,000 00.<sup>55</sup> White was a partner in the law firm White, Tunstall, and Willcox. According to White, he became a lawyer "principally by necessity to enter some pursuit that did not require cash."<sup>56</sup> White and wife Emma enlarged the house, and were probably responsible for the addition of the full-width porch with Corinthian posts.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> City of Richmond Land Tax Records, Clay Ward, 1882 and 1883, Library of Virginia.

<sup>55</sup> City of Richmond Land Tax Records, Clay Ward, 1883-1885; 1909, Library of Virginia.

<sup>56</sup> Tyler, *Men of Mark In Virginia*, vol. 5, 423.

<sup>57</sup> Robert Beverly Munford, Jr., *Richmond Homes and Memories* (Richmond: Garret and Massie, 1936), 156.

In 1884, James E. Goode, a local printer, built a house at 815 West Franklin Street.<sup>58</sup> Like the Montague House, it was in the Second Empire style, and can be described only from existing photographs (Figure 11). It was demolished sometime in the first half of the twentieth century. The land for this modest townhouse was acquired from John C. Shafer and was assessed in 1883 at \$1,815.00. By 1884, the house was completed and worth \$6,100.00, and the land and improvements combined were valued at \$10,833.00.<sup>59</sup>

The next house to be constructed along West Franklin Street was also in the 800 block, located at the southeast corner of Franklin and Shafer (Appendix A - 827). Land tax records for Clay Ward indicate that the house was owned in the name of Mary Saunders, whose husband Edmond A. Saunders was a successful wholesale grocer, liquors and commission merchant. The property was purchased from A.E. Dickinson and appears to have contained an existing dwelling, continually occupied in previous years according to the city directories.<sup>60</sup> In 1883, the extant house was valued at \$3,000.00, and house and property were worth \$6,900.00. The Saunders also acquired a strip of land to the south of the lot, valued at \$350.00. By 1884, the old house had been razed, and the new structure was incomplete, valued at \$8,000.00. By 1885, the

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<sup>58</sup> One of Goode's publications at this time was W.D. Chesterman's A Guide to Richmond and the Battle-Fields, 1884, though the 1891 reprint was published by another firm.

<sup>59</sup> City of Richmond Land Tax Records, Clay Ward, 1883-1886, Library of Virginia.

<sup>60</sup> The existence of the earlier frame house is further substantiated by Mary Wingfield Scott who wrote that "Saunders built on the site of Rev. James B. Taylor's modest frame home." Scott, Old Richmond Neighborhoods, 172. Taylor's home was one of the two earliest houses on the street. Built ca. 1855, it was a contemporary of the Ritter House (821) but its style is unaccounted for.



house was apparently completed, being assessed at \$25,000 00, and land and improvements combined at \$32,188.00 <sup>61</sup> In January 1886, the Saunders House was featured in an article entitled "The Finest Residences," appearing in the local paper, The State, along with other homes of prominent citizens. The article reported that:

Mr E.A. Saunders's handsome residence on Franklin and Shafer Streets, is a mixed style of architecture; some of its characteristics belonging to the period of Queen Anne, while others are of the earliest styles of the Greek and Roman architecture The interior is finished in hardwood On the main floor, the hall and library are of walnut and the parlors in cherry, and the dining room in quartered oak. The staircase is solid walnut. One of the most striking features of this house is the beautiful hall, at the lower end of which is a richly carved double door in walnut, with heavy French-plate mirror glass in each, making the hall appear double its length <sup>62</sup>

According to the 1893 Chamber of Commerce publication Richmond, Virginia. The City on the James, the interior finishes of the Saunders House were executed by local stair-builder and hardwood-finisher B.B. Van Buren, who would later work for some of the Saunders' neighbors. <sup>63</sup>

The house was also a lively variation on the Second Empire that predominated on the block. The two-and-one-half story, center-hall plan dwelling was built of red brick with contrasting yellow sandstone trim. Greek and Gothic details were incorporated into its eclectic ornamentally pedimented dormers. To the east, the engaged chimney was tied into the roof by a gable wall dormer with flanking lancet windows. The Saunders

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<sup>61</sup> City of Richmond Land Tax Records, Clay Ward, 1883-1886, Library of Virginia.

<sup>62</sup> "The Finest Residences: Elegant Homes of Well-Known Citizens, Some New Styles of Interior Finish, in Which Virginia Pine is Conspicuous" The State (Richmond, VA), 31 Jan 1886.

<sup>63</sup> Morrison, The City on the James, 168.

House was the first overt display of Victorian exuberance and eclecticism to be expressed along this portion of West Franklin Street.

E.A. Saunders & Sons' warehouse was located at the northwest corner of 14th and Cary Street (demolished). By 1893, Saunders' business was grossing over \$1,000,000.00 annually, making him one of the wealthiest men in town. Aside from his wholesale business, Saunders had business interests in New York and was involved in lumber trade and (Richmond) city real estate. He owned three plantations, Boscobel, 20 miles west of Richmond; Shirley, in Charles City County; and Buckland.<sup>64</sup>

Built during the same year that the Saunders' house was completed, Ashton and Florine (Dunlap) Starke's residence incorporated a hint of the Gothic detailing exhibited in the Saunders residence (Appendix A - 915). Starke commissioned the house in 1885 with funds from his wife Florine's trust that was still controlled by his father-in-law, Samuel Dunlap. The title was transferred to the couple in 1887.<sup>65</sup> The house was the first new house to go up on the 900 block since the undated house at 900, and it was the first house built on the south side of the block. Its value was comparable with the Montague and Goode houses, assessing at \$6,000.00, with land and improvements combined worth \$9,500.00<sup>66</sup> According to the writer Robert Beverly

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<sup>64</sup> Morrison, The City on the James, 215-216.

<sup>65</sup> City of Richmond Land Tax Records, Clay Ward, 1885-1887, Library of Virginia.

<sup>66</sup> City of Richmond Land Tax Records, Clay Ward. After the construction of the Saunders House, property values along the 800 and 900 blocks increased; Montague's house that was initially assessed at \$4,000.00 was reassessed at \$6,000.00. Even Blanchard's \$18,000.00 assessment was bumped up to \$20,000.00 when it was sold to Forbes, and the land and improvements combined were valued at \$32,188.00.

Munford, Jr., "[the Starke] home was one long associated with the city's social life."<sup>67</sup> In style and detailing, Starke House compares favorably with the contemporary house of Joseph Bryan, Laburnum (1884-1885, destroyed 1906 [Figure 12]). Laburnum was constructed by prolific Richmond builders, the Gibson Brothers.<sup>68</sup> Certain elements, such as the window treatment and the vaguely Gothic details, along with the awkward execution of the exterior ornamentation and organization, might indicate that the Gibsons were involved with the construction of Starke's house. Whether or not the Gibsons were involved, Starke's townhouse appears to have been inspired by its contemporary, Laburnum. Starke and Bryan were associated through their memberships in various social clubs in the city. Pending further substantiation, this attribution is tentative.

Ashton Starke was featured in the Richmond Dispatch in 1904 as one of the "Makers of Richmond."<sup>69</sup> The article describes an affable man, well-liked and well-regarded by his peers in civic and social circles, who stood "something less than six feet six inches in height." Starke made his money in the agricultural implements business, and was president of the successful Virginia Agricultural Exposition at the "new" fairgrounds in 1888. As a former president of the Commonwealth Club, Starke

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<sup>67</sup> Munford, Richmond Homes and Memories, 26.

<sup>68</sup> Anne A. Ferris, "Joseph Bryan's Lost Laburnum," The Architecture of Virginia: Abstracts from the 1994 Architectural History Symposium (Richmond: Virginia Commonwealth University, 1996), 24-25.

<sup>69</sup> "The Makers of Richmond: Ashton Starke," Richmond Dispatch, 8 July 1904.

would have been socially associated with many of his neighbors, including Lewis Ginter.

Tobacco money helped build the Second Empire house at 820 West Franklin Street (Appendix A - 820). Thomas H. Gunn, a partner in Christian & Gunn, tobacco stemmers and commission merchants, hired local contractors Trexler & Elmore to build a two-and-one-half story, three-bay brick house in 1886.<sup>70</sup> This late manifestation of the Second Empire is likely due in part to the influence of the Second Empire precedents on the street. Another probability is that the house was designed by the local contractor who built it, or the contractors used existing plans for its construction. Local contractors were rarely on the cutting edge of current architectural styles. The house was built on a side-hall plan, and on first glance appears to be a three-fifths-scale version of 806 West Franklin Street.

After Gunn's death in 1888, Philany Gunn sold adjacent land to the west to Samson Hirsh whose wife, Amelia, already held the plat at 824 West Franklin Street.<sup>71</sup> By 1891, Philany Gunn sold the house to T. William Pemberton, described as "a man of private means."<sup>72</sup> Pemberton lived there until his death in 1912. Pemberton had worked for D.O. Davis and Company, wholesale grocers and liquor dealers, a similar line of work as neighbor, E.A. Saunders. E.A. Saunders & Sons was located across Cary Street from D.O. Davis and Company, making Saunders and Pemberton

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<sup>70</sup> Morrison, The City on the James, 164. For a discussion of the firm Trexler and Elmore see Carneal, Richmond's Fan District, 87.

<sup>71</sup> City of Richmond Land Tax Records, Clay Ward, 1888-1891, Library of Virginia.

<sup>72</sup> Carneal, Richmond's Fan District, 153.

neighbors at work and at home. Pemberton left the firm in 1888. Saunders and Pemberton were also involved in land speculation. The two, along with other partners, bought and sold numerous properties throughout Clay Ward.<sup>73</sup>

Between 1887 and 1888, the plats of land between the Ordway-Skinker House (801) and the J.J. Montague House (811) were developed into three townhouses for C.P. Stokes (803/5), T.H. Ellett (807) and B.H. Nash (809) (all demolished in the 1950s). The property on which the houses were built belonged to Charles R. Skinker of 801 West Franklin Street. City directories indicate that Stokes, Nash, and Ellett were in residence by 1888, and Land tax records for Clay Ward indicate that Skinker held the titles to the properties until that time. In 1889, Benjamin H. and Mattie M. Nash paid taxes on a house valued at \$8,000.00. In 1890, C.P. Stokes first paid taxes on a house valued at \$9,200.00 acquired from Charles R. Skinker Trust, and T.H. Ellett paid tax on a house valued at \$10,000.00, also from Charles R. Skinker Trust. No photos could be located to thoroughly describe the style of 805, 807, and 809. There is limited photographic evidence indicating the presence of rock-faced brownstone or granite first floors on 805 and 807, suggesting that these dwellings represented a departure from the Second Empire so common to the 800 block (Figures 10, 11). 809 appears to have been built as a Second Empire townhouse, but it was remodelled in the Richardsonian Romanesque style by the early to mid-1890s.

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<sup>73</sup> This information was gained through the City of Richmond Land Tax records, Clay Ward, various years. Saunders' and Pemberton's names are listed as joint owners of numerous undeveloped properties.

Charles Pickett Stokes is referred to in the 1893 Chamber of Commerce publication as a “capitalist.” What was described as his “palatial home” on the “Fifth Avenue of Richmond,” was attributed to the local architect Carl Ruehrmund.<sup>74</sup> The house incorporated a typical Ruehrmund element, the curve, in its projecting bay. The first floor was rock-faced stone, with a Syrian-arch entry and a distinctly curving bay (the corner of this house can be seen in Figure 6). Stokes lived on the 800 block until 1892, when he and wife Mary Gwatkin Stokes relocated to 922 West Franklin Street. The Stokeses purchased the house at auction after the death of its original owner, Percival S. Grant.<sup>75</sup>

Stokes' neighbor T.H. Ellett was a successful feed dealer. References in two Chamber of Commerce publications indicate that Ellett's house was designed by Capt. M. J. Dimmock, considered to be a major force in the Richmond architecture profession.<sup>76</sup> The Ellett House interior work was done by B.B. Van Buren, whose previous commissions included the Saunders House at 827 West Franklin Street.<sup>77</sup> The erection of two townhouses in the Richardsonian Romanesque style was unprecedented on the 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street. After Stokes' and Ellett's townhouses, Major Lewis Ginter would be the first resident to commission a full-blown mansion in the style.

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<sup>74</sup> Morrison, The City on the James, 59.

<sup>75</sup> Munford, Richmond Homes and Memories, 140. Notice of Auction, Richmond Dispatch, 29 July 1892: 4.

<sup>76</sup> Richmond and the New South, 26; Richmond, Pride of Virginia: An Historical City, 95.

<sup>77</sup> Morrison, The City on the James, 168.

Benjamin H. Nash of 809 West Franklin Street was an attorney for a number of railroad and street car companies. He was admitted to the Bar in Virginia in 1855, and served as Captain of Company B, 41st Virginia Infantry during the war. He was also acting adjutant-general of Mahone's Brigade.<sup>78</sup> Nash lived at 809 West Franklin Street with his wife, Mattie. The Nash House appears in old photographs to have been built in a variation on the Second Empire style (Figure 10) It was apparently remodeled in the early to mid-1890s to reflect the popular Richardsonian Romanesque style (Figure 11).

The next attorney to relocate to the 800 block would be John Dunlop and his wife, Mildred Maury Dunlop, who chose to erect a house in the Queen Anne Style, unprecedented in the neighborhood (Appendix A - 816). The house was built in 1887 on the north side of the block, on the west side of the Williams House (Figure 5).<sup>79</sup> This is another side-hall plan dwelling, constructed of brick with decorative inset tilework on the facade and half-timbering in the gable. The original color-scheme has been lost under green and white paint, but evidence of its underlying textural variety can be discerned.

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<sup>78</sup> Morrison, *The City on the James*, 278.

<sup>79</sup> A Mutual Assurance Society Policy for the Dunlop House dated 1887 is in the Library of Virginia. The Dunlop House is today known as Harrison House. After a street renumbering in the first quarter of the twentieth century, its number was changed from 818 to 816.

Dunlop, described by a former neighbor as a "bewhiskered Englishman,"<sup>80</sup> was yet another associate of Lewis Ginter, reportedly playing draw poker together.<sup>81</sup> After his death ca. 1900, his wife continued to reside in the house. Mildred ("Milly") Maury Dunlop retained her social standing, serving as President of the Women's Club at Bolling-Haxall House from 1901-1902.<sup>82</sup> Mrs. Dunlop was reputedly "a woman of cultivated intellect and natural wit," and held court in her rear parlor. The Dunlops amassed an eclectic and interesting library that reportedly was left to the state library.<sup>83</sup>

Also built between 1887 and 1888 was the second new house on the south side of the 900 block (Appendix A - 917), on the plat adjacent to the west side of the Starke residence (Appendix A - 915).<sup>84</sup> The three-bay-wide, three-story, Italianate brick townhouse was built on a side-hall plan, and featured flush stone lintels, a cast-iron portico of the Corinthian order and bracket and modillion cornice. The house was built for Nathaniel Woodson Bowe, who began his career as a bookkeeper with Grubbs & Williams, real estate agents and auctioneers, before becoming a partner in his own firm with A.D. Williams, son of T.C. Williams, Sr., and resident of 816 West Franklin Street. The announcement was made in 1884 that "A.D. Williams, of the late firm Grubbs &

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<sup>80</sup> Smith, Tears and Laughter, 12.

<sup>81</sup> Maurice Duke and Daniel P. Jordan, eds., "It seemed everything he touched turned to gold": Lewis Ginter," A Richmond Reader, 1733-1983 (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1983), 316.

<sup>82</sup> Sandra Gioia Treadway, Women of Mark: A History of the Woman's Club of Richmond, Virginia, 1894-1994 (Richmond: Library of Virginia, 1995), 139.

<sup>83</sup> Munford, Richmond Homes and Memories, 93.

<sup>84</sup> City of Richmond Land Tax Records, Clay Ward 1887-1888, Library of Virginia.



Williams," and "N.W. Bowe, long of Grubbs & Williams," had formed the partnership of Williams & Bowe, real estate and loans.<sup>85</sup> Eventually, Bowe formed N.W. Bowe & Sons with sons Stuart and Bruce, and sold and managed real estate throughout Richmond. Bowe was also a Notary Public, and consequently many of his neighbors' deeds bear his witness.

In 1887 or 1888, a house was built at 813 West Franklin Street for Clement R. Barksdale, a tobacconist (Figure 12).<sup>86</sup> Barksdale owned a house at Franklin Street and Adams, east of Belvidere. The earlier house was described in 1886 as "one of the prettiest and most homelike dwellings in this city....Its principal features are the large and commodious rooms and spacious grounds, fountains and beautiful surroundings."<sup>87</sup> It is uncertain why Barksdale chose to relocate to a considerably smaller property. By 1894, the widow Mrs. Frances B. Gordon was occupying the house and Barksdale disappears from the directories. After Mrs. Gordon's residence, 813 was bought by Warner Moore of Warner Moore & Company, manufacturers of lime, cement and plaster. The style of the Barksdale House can be discerned from the limited photographic evidence available. It consisted of a rock-faced first floor and included a three-story corner tower with a polygonal layered roof (Figures 10, 11 and 12). The house was one of several demolished by RPI in the 1950s to make way for new construction.

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<sup>85</sup> Chataigne's Directory of Richmond (Richmond: J.H. Chataigne, 1884).

<sup>86</sup> City of Richmond Land Tax Records, Clay Ward 1887-1888, Library of Virginia.

<sup>87</sup> "The Finest Residences."

The arrival of Major Lewis Ginter to 901 West Franklin marked a major stylistic shift in building styles along the street. It was not until Ginter's commission of a house from Washington architect Harvey L. Page, that the street would be noted for its architectural currency. The building of Ginter House influenced many later builders by reinforcing the Richardsonian Romanesque idiom on a street that had, with few exceptions, been built in waning architectural styles for the past ten years. Though Stokes (805) and Ellett (807) commissioned local architects to design apparently Richardsonian Romanesque townhouses as early as 1887, Ginter House was the first full-blown manifestation of the style. Photographs and illustrations of Ginter House were also widely published in local booster publications, picture books, and souvenirs of Richmond. Most of the houses that are contemporaries of or post-date Ginter's can be attributed to local architects open to outside influences from New York, Philadelphia or Washington, or architects from the major metropolitan areas of the East Coast. This interest in architect-designed homes suggests that the effect of Stokes', Ellett's, and Ginter's architectural patronage was to inspire others to "keep-up" with their precedent-setting neighbors.

In 1888, Ginter House was begun. It would take nearly four years to complete the massive mansion. As completed by 1892, the house alone assessed at \$60,000.00, nearly eight times the value of the average townhouse on the street, and three times as much as the largest houses to date.<sup>88</sup> The main block of Ginter House

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<sup>88</sup> City of Richmond Land Tax Records, Clay Ward, 1892. The average townhouse was assessing at between \$8,000 and \$9,000.00 dollars (Appendix A - 922). The Blanchard-White House (Appendix A - 806), built in the early to 1880s, assessed at \$19,950.00. The newly completed Hirsh House (824 West Franklin Street, demolished 1937 [Figure 9]) was valued

is three-and-one-half stories in height, and was built on a center-hall plan. The wide living hall is flanked by parlors. The east parlor is articulated on the exterior as a square projecting bay. The west parlor is partially comprised in the polygonal three-story tower. The stone and brick work is executed in a hierarchy of materials. The basement is clad in rock-faced brownstone. The first floor is finished in pecked brownstone. Upper floors are pressed brick executed in both stretcher courses and basket weave patterns. Molded brick and drilled stone panels are inset into the exterior. The east elevation contains a Syrian arch over a recessed entrance and a two-story bowed bay. The roof is clad in Spanish tiles. A service wing with additions made in 1939 and 1949, meanders off the south west corner of the main block of the building.

The detailing of Ginter House is exquisite in materials and workmanship. The stairs were executed by local stair-builder B.B. Van Buren who performed interior woodwork for the Saunders (827) and Elletts (807).<sup>89</sup> The exterior includes a massive oak lintel supporting the front porch, spanning cut and carved stone columns. A unique feature of both the interior and exterior is the dichroic art glass. The glass, used in the transoms of the first floor windows, reflects different colors depending upon whether it is viewed from the interior or exterior.<sup>90</sup>

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at \$20,000.00.

<sup>89</sup> A more thorough discussion of Ginter House can be found in Dale Wheary, "The Sense of Truth and Beauty: Harvey L. Page builds a house for Lewis Ginter," in Abstracts of the 1994 Architectural History Symposium: The Architecture of Virginia (Richmond: Virginia Commonwealth University, 1996), 15-17.

<sup>90</sup> Hurt, "Art Glass," 2.

The Ginter stable was converted in the 1930s to the Anderson Gallery. The WPA then funded the enlargement of the gallery, obliterating the original design. The stable building also housed the library before construction of the James Branch Cabell Library between Floyd and Shafer Court.<sup>91</sup>

The bachelor Ginter was a man of great wealth and taste. An entrepreneur from the north, Ginter made a fortune in the tobacco industry after the Civil War. He was well-regarded in the community (despite his Yankee roots), and spent a great deal of his wealth fostering the growth of Richmond into a first-class city. He was responsible for developing one of Richmond's "better" suburbs, Ginter Park, and for commissioning the elegant Jefferson Hotel (1893-1895) from New York architects Carrere and Hastings. Ginter did not enjoy his new house on West Franklin Street for long, dying 2 October 1897. He left his house to niece Grace Arents. The house was later used as the Richmond Public Library in the 1920s. When the library announced its impending relocation in 1929, the William & Mary Extension negotiated to acquire the property in 1931.<sup>92</sup>

Two houses attributable to local architects were built the same year that Major Ginter's house was begun. Both 918 West Franklin Street (Appendix A - 918) and 922 West Franklin Street (Appendix A - 922) were begun in 1888 and occupied by the following year. Their interest lies in the variation in style manifested by two local architects working in the same period with distinctly different influences.

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<sup>91</sup> Henry Hibbs, The History of RPI (Richmond: Whittet and Shepperson, 1973), 47;70;147.

<sup>92</sup> Hibbs, The History of RPI, 47-50.

The house at 918 West Franklin Street (Appendix A - 918) was designed by German-American Carl Ruehrmund for William G. Stokes (in trust for S.L. Stokes, probably his wife). Ruehrmund received his training at the Royal Academy of Architecture in Berlin, and emigrated the States in 1881. His designs exhibited bold curvilinearity, like the later Steinbrecher building at 415 West Broad Street (1915, demolished 1980s [Figure 14]).<sup>93</sup> The style of the Stokes House was unprecedented on the street. It is embellished with terra cotta ornament, and its curving parapet is a departure from the commonly preferred French roofs or bracketed cornices of its neighbors. The three-story Stokes House includes a two-story projecting bay crowned with a bulging wrought-iron balustrade. The red brick facade is accented with rock-faced granite lintels that follow the tightly-radiused curve of the windows in the bay. Rectangular inset panels on the facade contain groups of terra cotta medallions. At the cornice, above a granite belt course, is a double frieze of ornament, both geometric and floral, with putto portrait medallions at each end.

Stokes made his money like many of his neighbors, in the wholesale grocery and commission merchant business. Stokes began his career working for his father's company, A.Y. Stokes & Company. After the death of the senior Stokes in 1886, Thomas Potts, W.G. Stokes, and brother Allen Y. Stokes, Jr., formed Potts, Stokes & Co., wholesale grocers and commission merchants. After the dissolution of Potts,

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<sup>93</sup> "Architecture in Richmond, Va." See also Murphy, "Albert Lybrock, Carl Ruehrmund, and the Influence of Nineteenth-century German Architecture in Richmond."

Stokes, & Co., W.G. Stokes went into business manufacturing harnesses in the firm Wright & Stokes, steam tannery and collar factory.<sup>94</sup>

In contrast to the imaginative and fanciful treatment of the facade of Stokes House, the house at 922 West Franklin (Appendix A - 922), adheres to an older and more conservative tradition. It is the near-twin (though considerably smaller) of a house built in 1886 at 2 West Franklin Street and designed by Albert L. West (Figure 15).<sup>95</sup> The facades of 918 and 922 are similarly organized, three-stories high with a two story projecting bay on the east side. Whereas 918 has a curved bay, 922 has a polygonal projecting bay. It was probably built with a portico that was later altered into the larger porch with paired Doric columns and pilasters, and topped with a spindle balustrade. The focus of the facade would have been the contrasting stone lintels over each window. Each floor exhibits a different lintel treatment. On the first floor, the lintels are peaked and carved to correspond to the notched edges of the windows. The second floor lintels are rectangular and wrap around the tops of the windows. On the third floor, the lintels are straight.

The house was built for Percival S. Grant, listed in the directories as a clerk. Grant's house was valued at \$8,700.00 by the time it was occupied in 1889. The house was originally numbered 916 West Franklin Street, but as land was divided up and sold, the number changed to 922. Grant's death in 1892 led to the sale of the house

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<sup>94</sup> Stokes' business history is extrapolated from various Richmond directories published throughout the 1880s.

<sup>95</sup> Christopher V. Novelli, a 1996 graduate of the University of Virginia, should be credited with recognizing the similarities between 2 and 922 West Franklin Street and sharing his information informally.

at auction.<sup>96</sup> It was purchased by the C.P. Stokes family, formerly of 805 West Franklin Street. It was later bought by real estate developer William Erskine Buford around 1914.<sup>97</sup>

The next major house to be started after Ginter's was the Hirsh House at 824 West Franklin Street (Figure 9). Amelia (Millhiser) Hirsh was the daughter of prominent local merchant Moses Millhiser. Amelia Millhiser married Samson Hirsh on 10 August 1870.<sup>98</sup> In 1871, Samson Hirsh was made a partner in the Millhiser family business. Moses Millhiser started out as a retail dry goods merchant, and over time built a considerable business empire, topping \$1,000,000.00 in sales in 1892.<sup>99</sup> Hirsh, along with Millhiser's sons Gustavus and Clarence, helped the business branch into clothing manufacturing, among other business interests. All were involved in the Chamber of Commerce, local bank boards, and land development corporations. Moses Millhiser and Samson Hirsh owned a number of lots along the 900 and 1000 blocks of West Franklin Street, perhaps due to their involvement in the West End Land Company (Moses Millhiser, director) and Perpetual Building and Loan (Samson Hirsh,

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<sup>96</sup> Notice of Auction, Richmond Dispatch, 29 July 1892: 4.

<sup>97</sup> City of Richmond Land Tax Records, Clay Ward, 1888-1889. The renumbering of the street is apparent when one consults the city directories. As new houses were constructed the street numbers were shifted around to accommodate the in-fill development.

<sup>98</sup> Wedding Invitation, Ephemera File, Valentine Museum, Richmond Virginia

<sup>99</sup> Morrison, The City on the James, 229.

president).<sup>100</sup> Amelia Hirsh held property in her name at 824 West Franklin Street, on which she and her husband would build a house.

The 1 January 1890 edition of the *Richmond Dispatch* heralded the construction of a home being erected for "Samuel [sic] Hirsh". In fact it was Samson and Amelia Hirsh's house at 824 West Franklin Street (Figure 9) that was recognized along with that of Lewis Ginter as two of the "palatial residences....now in course of construction."<sup>101</sup> The Richardsonian Romanesque-inspired Hirsh House must have been spectacular indeed, but its imposing asymmetrical facade can be described from only one existing photograph.<sup>102</sup> The first floor was clad in rock-faced brownstone, and the upper two stories were of brick. A prominent central tower divided the facade into two halves. The east half contained the broad Syrian arch of the entry porch, surmounted by a triple-arcaded balcony. The half story above entailed three vents treated as lunettes. A two-story turret defined the eastern edge of the facade. On the east elevation, the upper two stories were cantilevered over the side yard and turrets rose from the projecting bays. The west half of the facade appears to have been three full stories in height, two bays wide, with a triple arcade at the third-floor level.

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<sup>100</sup> Morrison, *The City on the James*, 229. The West End Land Company was involved in speculation in developing Clay Ward and in properties beyond the Boulevard, at the time the boundary between Richmond and Henrico County.

<sup>101</sup> *Richmond Dispatch*, 1 January 1890: 1.

<sup>102</sup> An argument for the attribution to Washington architect William M. Poindexter will be made in the ensuing discussion of Millhiser House (Appendix A - 916).



The Hirshes and their three children, Florine, Stella, and Allan, occupied 824 West Franklin Street prior to relocating to Montclair, New Jersey.<sup>103</sup> After the Hirshes relocated around the turn of the century, 824 was bought by T.C. Williams, Jr., son of T.C. Williams, Sr., by this time the late tobacco magnate. Williams, Jr.'s mother, Ella Williams, moved in with her son, and Mary Williams, Ella's daughter. The relocation to only a few doors away was described by Ella Williams Smith, granddaughter of Ella Williams, as being a move of convenience. The elderly Mrs. Williams was in poor health by the time the move was made to 824 West Franklin. The new house was described by Williams' granddaughter as being much less attractive [than the Italianate Williams House at 816], but more convenient,<sup>104</sup> presumably because the Richardsonian Romanesque house included such modern conveniences as indoor flush toilets and an attached kitchen. Mrs. Williams died in 1902.

T.C. Williams, Jr., lived at 824 West Franklin Street until 1926. By that time, Williams had acquired Agcroft and was having the manor dismantled and shipped from England. The house, once reassembled, was to be one of two centerpieces of the Windsor Farms development, land that the Williams family owned that Williams developed with John Nolen and local contractor Allen J. Saville.<sup>105</sup> After Williams moved west, 824 West Franklin Street briefly housed the Commonwealth Club after a

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<sup>103</sup> Munford, Richmond Homes and Memories, 138.

<sup>104</sup> Smith, Tears and Laughter, 23.

<sup>105</sup> Virginia House, owned by Alexander and Virginia Weddell, was the other historic house to be reassembled in Windsor Farms. By the late 1920s, Windsor Farms was becoming what West Franklin Street was to the late-nineteenth century, the most desirable upper-class residential district.

fire damaged the Carrere-and-Hastings-designed building at the corner of Franklin and Monroe Streets. The house at 824 West Franklin Street was razed in 1937. Its inadequate replacement is a nondescript Colonial Revival church built in the 1950s (Figure 16).

Another full-blown Richardsonian Romanesque house was undertaken in 1890 at 800 West Franklin Street, at the northwest corner of Franklin and Laurel, diagonally opposite Monroe Park (Appendix A - 800). After the Ginter and Hirsh houses, 800 West Franklin Street was the truest free-standing adaptation of the Richardsonian Romanesque constructed on West Franklin Street. "Conceded [at the time of its construction]...to be the handsomest in the city," this important building is the cornerstone of the 800 block of West Franklin.<sup>106</sup> It has been attributed to major Richmond architect M. J. Dimmock, and it represents the second and only extant commission for Dimmock on the block.<sup>107</sup> The facade of the two-and-one half story, coursed, rock-faced grey granite house is composed of front gable and corner tower capped with a bell-shape roof. The house is capped with a pyramidal hipped roof with cross gables and pantile roof topped with a spherical finial. The granite used for this house most likely came from a local source, described in an 1890 newspaper article as "unrivalled James River Granite."<sup>108</sup> The front porch and pierced stone parapet is supported by paired columns with foliate cushion capitals. A later conservatory was

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<sup>106</sup> Morrison, The City on the James, 163.

<sup>107</sup> Richmond, Pride of Virginia, 95.

<sup>108</sup> Richmond Dispatch, 1 January 1890: 1.

added to the east elevation, occluding the Syrian-arched side entrance (Figure 17). The conservatory addition consists of clear and colored glass panes framed with incongruous neo-Classical motifs. The house was photographed as part of a streetscape for the publication Picturesque Richmond, appearing in 1891 (Figure 10).<sup>109</sup> The photograph shows construction debris in the front yard and street, and the work nearing completion on the front wall.

The house was built by local contractor T. Wiley Davis for William Henry Jones, a tobacco merchant of Richmond.<sup>110</sup> Jones sold the house in 1899 to Adolph Dill Williams, son of tobacco magnate T.C. Williams, Sr. A.D. Williams was a partner in Grubbs & Williams, Real Estate Agents and Auctioneers. A new partnership was formed with N.W. Bowe in 1884, creating Williams & Bowe, Real Estate and Loans. Williams and his wife were collectors of fine art and philanthropists in the community. 800 West Franklin Street was purchased by the Richmond Professional Institute in June 1952. It was the first RPI building acquired with state funding.<sup>111</sup>

In 1888, Sallie McAdams (Sarah Read Branch McAdams) acquired land on the north side of the 900 block of West Franklin Street from John P. Branch. McAdams' husband, George B. McAdams, was the senior partner in the firm McAdams & Berry, clothiers, and something of a self-made man. An orphan who had come to Richmond

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<sup>109</sup> Picturesque Richmond: Richmond, Virginia, and Her Suburbs (Richmond: J.L. Hill Printing Co., 1891), n. pag.

<sup>110</sup> Morrison, The City on the James, 163.

<sup>111</sup> "RPI Buys Williams' Home for School of Social Work," Richmond News-Leader, 21 June 1952: 1.

from Florida, McAdams worked his way up the social ladder, marrying into one of the most prominent Richmond families, the Branches. Sallie McAdams sold half the West Franklin Street property to Thomas E. Stagg, who was also a self-made man. Stagg came to Richmond from Charles City County, starting his career in Richmond as a carpenter. Over time, Stagg bought out manufacturing concerns on East Cary Street and began his own manufacturing business and planing mill. Stagg owned the warehouses from 1413 to 1423 East Cary Street and operated a mill in Chesterfield County.<sup>112</sup> Thos. E. Stagg & Company specialized in box manufacture, sashes, doors, blinds, and interior finishes.

The Staggs and McAdamses built a pair of stylistically-related townhouses at 912-914 West Franklin Street, respectively (Appendix A - 912, 914). The houses were designed by Richmond architect Albert L. West, and represent two of West's last commissions before his death in 1892. The stone and brickwork was executed by W.O. Burton, local contractor, builder, and manufacturer of brick.<sup>113</sup> West's townhouses were undoubtedly inspired by Detroit architect Elijah E. Myers' contemporary design for Richmond City Hall (1887-1893 [Figure 18]). Both the Stagg and McAdams houses exhibit distinctly Gothic elements clad in a skin of rock-faced grey granite indebted to the Richardsonian Romanesque. The McAdams House at 914 originally exhibited polychromy in the red pressed-brick upper-floors. Both houses represent a local architect, entrenched in earlier architectural traditions, grappling with a new style.

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<sup>112</sup> Morrison, The City in the James, 161.

<sup>113</sup> Morrison, The City in the James, 169.

The houses at 912 and 914 West Franklin Street were the scenes of two major tragedies for the earliest residents. George B. McAdams was described as "...one of the most handsome men that anybody ever saw anywhere....[who] nearly always wore a light grey suit....with a red flower on the lapel...."<sup>114</sup> In 1896, McAdams reportedly "dropped dead while watching a parade from his front porch."<sup>115</sup> The Staggs' tragedy occurred in 1902, when Hunter Stagg, seven-year-old son of Thomas E. Stagg, was run down by a carriage while playing in the street in front of his house. The newspaper reported that "[a] hole was knocked in the child's skull and it was feared his brain was affected."<sup>116</sup> Hunter Stagg recovered, but suffered seizures throughout his adult life.

The Williams family owned property on the south side of the 900 block of West Franklin. In 1891 Ella Williams sold the first plat to Lawson Chiles Younger who would erect a house on the site. Younger was a native of Pittsylvania County and came to Richmond after the war.<sup>117</sup> Prior to purchasing the property on West Franklin Street, Younger had boarded at the St. James Hotel (15 North 12th Street) and in a private residence at 500 East Grace. L.C. Younger started his wholesale grocery career in the partnership Heitman & Younger, 13 South 14th Street. By the 1890s, a new firm, L.C. Younger & Co., was a subsidiary of the many Millhiser business enterprises. Unlike the

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<sup>114</sup> Edgar McDonald, James Branch Cabell and Richmond-in-Virginia (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1993), 34.

<sup>115</sup> McDonald, James Branch Cabell and Richmond-in-Virginia, 61.

<sup>116</sup> Unidentified newspaper clipping, dated 1902. Richmond Clippings file, James Branch Cabell Special Collections, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>117</sup> Richmond, Pride of Virginia, 78.

Hirshes' high-styled house at 824 West Franklin (Figure 9), Younger's residence was a conservative, three-story townhouse on a side-hall plan, with a projecting polygonal bay (Appendix A - 919). The facade was red pressed brick, with rock-faced granite lintels and belt-courses. The original roof and cornice treatment is unknown due to a remodeling in 1904, but the Younger House appears to have entailed a modicum of Richardsonian Romanesque detail.

In 1891 the foundations were being laid for a house on the north side of the block, at 916 West Franklin (Appendix A - 916). Clay Ward tax records indicate that Samson Hirsh, of the newly completed 824 West Franklin Street (Figure 9), had bought the property from Ella C. Myers in June 1890. By 1891, \$4,000.00 worth of improvements had been made. In 1892, another \$8,000.00 worth of improvements were made, totaling \$12,000.00. By the 1894 assessment, the house was valued at \$18,000.00, the same value assessed on Hirsh's completed home at 824 West Franklin. Soon thereafter, on 17 December 1894, Hirsh transferred the property to brother-in-law Gustavus Millhiser for \$5.00. Millhiser family history indicates that the house was built as a wedding present for Gustavus, but the wedding plans fell through.<sup>118</sup> The bachelor Gustavus Millhiser remained in residence until his death in 1915. Brother Clarence then sold the house to the Catholic Women's Club, which later sold it to RPI in 1964.

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<sup>118</sup> An oral history of Millhiser House by Millhiser niece Elizabeth Millhiser Morris is cited in Harry Kollatz, Jr., "Flashback: The Millhiser House," Richmond Magazine, vol. 6 (March 1997): 20-21.

Millhiser House has been attributed to native Richmonder William M. Poindexter, whose architectural practice was based in Washington, D.C.<sup>119</sup> The house is certainly the most exotic extant design on the street, though stylistically it compares favorably to the Hirshes' towered and turretted residence one block away (Figure 9). The attribution of 916 West Franklin Street to Poindexter could implicate Poindexter in the design of 824 West Franklin Street. The stylistic similarities are striking, and both houses apparently were commissioned by the same patron, Samson Hirsh.<sup>120</sup>

While 916 West Franklin Street was being erected, a house at the northeast corner of Franklin and Shafer was also under construction (Appendix A - 826). In 1889, Richmonder Charles H. Read had returned to the city from a stint in the Office of the Supervising Architect of the United States in Washington, D.C. By 1892, a Read-designed house was built for Leon L. Strause, partner in Strause & Bernard, successful leaf-tobacco dealers. Strause started his tobacco enterprise in Danville, Virginia before coming to Richmond in 1881. By the turn of the century, Strause established an international business. The house at 826 West Franklin Street was built out of vivid gold bricks (often called "Tiffany Gold") with a contrasting red sandstone

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<sup>119</sup> Calder Loth, editor, The Virginia Landmarks Register, Third Edition (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1986), 368. William M. Poindexter is not to be confused with Benjamin West Poindexter, a Richmond architect working during the same period.

<sup>120</sup> During the same period as the Hirsh and Millhiser houses, Poindexter was working in Richmond. Poindexter designed the classically-inspired State Library in Capitol Square (1892-97), now the Finance Building. Poindexter's original conception for the State Library building was asymmetrical, with a single wing flanking the central mass left unbalanced by the lack of a corresponding wing. 824 and 916 exhibited a similar freedom with asymmetry and a sense of precarious balance. Later alterations to the State Library/Finance building by Carneal & Johnston in the 1920s sought to balance the facade with a new wing and new columns.

foundation and trim. Local contractor Mason & Sim executed the construction.<sup>121</sup> The design combined the Richardsonian Romanesque with chateausque elements, as evidenced in the steeply pitched tower roof and wall dormers. In 1900, Read published several of his designs in a book entitled Modern Buildings Designed by Charles H. Read, 1882-1900.<sup>122</sup> Depicted along with major commissions such as the Planters National Bank (1200 East Main Street, 1893 [Figure 19]) was the residence designed for L.L. Strause (Figure 20).

Circa 1892, a house at 819 West Franklin Street was begun for Richard Louis Brown (Figure 21). Brown was a partner in Brown, Davis, and Atkins, wholesale grocers and liquor dealers. The partnership had formed after the withdrawal of T. William Pemberton (of 820 West Franklin Street) from D.O. Davis in 1888.<sup>123</sup> The house was an excellent example of the Richardsonian Romanesque adapted to a townhouse. The brownstone structure included numerous examples of intricate drilled stonework and *rinceaux*. The house came to be known as the Moore House when it was bought by RPI and remodeled into a dorm and activities center. Though it no longer exists, a fair comparison can be made between 819 West Franklin Street and the house built at 1000 West Franklin Street around the same time (Figure 22). The house at 819 West Franklin Street was demolished in the 1950s to make way for new construction.

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<sup>121</sup> Morrison, The City on the James, 171.

<sup>122</sup> Charles H. Read, Jr. Modern Buildings Designed by Charles H. Read, 1882-1900 (Richmond: Jones & Son, 1900), n. pag.

<sup>123</sup> Richmond and the New South, 144.



A new Williams-related house was begun in 1893 (Appendix A - 808). It was the first house commissioned by a Williams, specifically by Sue Williams Buek and her first husband, Charles Edward Buek. Williams and Buek were married 15 February 1883 at the First Baptist Church in Richmond.<sup>124</sup> The couple lived with the Williams family at 816 West Franklin Street (Figure 5) until the completion of their own house next door. In 1890, Ella P. Williams deeded land at the edge of the family property to her daughter, Sue. The land that was divided off was the former site of the family grape arbor. The Bueks chose New York City architect Peter Lauritsen to design a house in the American Renaissance style.<sup>125</sup> By 1893, the first improvements on the lot, amounting to \$10,000.00, were taxed by the city. The following year, another \$10,000.00 worth of improvements was noted by the assessor. The completed house was assessed at \$20,000.00, establishing it as one of the grander houses in the neighborhood.

Buek was the American-born son of German immigrants. He was involved in numerous business concerns in Richmond, among them the Richmond Elevator Company and Curtis & Buek, foreign ship brokers. According to the Bueks' daughter, Buek was not satisfied with his independent-minded wife. Sue Williams Buek's refusal to leave her family and Richmond to relocate to Chattanooga, combined with her

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<sup>124</sup> Wedding invitation, Ephemera File, Valentine Museum Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>125</sup> Attribution courtesy of John Wells, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, from John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, The Virginia Architects, 1835-1955: A Biographical Dictionary (Richmond: New South Architectural Press, forthcoming).

refusal to be the “meek hausfrau” for Buek, led to the dissolution of the marriage.<sup>126</sup> After her divorce Sue Williams remarried W.R. Massie. Williams-Buek-Massie sold the house at 808 West Franklin Street to B. Pollard Cardosa in 1912. The Massies then lived part-time at the Berkeley Apartments at 923 West Franklin Street (1910 [Appendix A - 923]) and spent the balance of their time at the springs and at Rose Hill in Charlottesville. The house was owned briefly in the 1930s by William P. Thurston, a building contractor. Thurston never lived in the house, and only owned it as a rental property.<sup>127</sup>

Around 1893, a townhouse was built for J.T. Parkinson at 906 West Franklin Street. Parkinson was a superintendent for one of the T.C. Williams Tobacco Company factories in Richmond. Little has been unearthed about this now-demolished building. Limited photographic evidence illustrates the Richardsonian Romanesque style dwelling (Figure 4). It was three stories in height, with a sharply-peaked gable paired with a tower on the east side of the facade. It was apparently faced in brownstone and included detailing similar to that of many of the contemporary Richardsonian Romanesque townhouses that were its neighbors. The house was allegedly occupied by the theater department of VCU as a dormitory. The theater department was located next door in the Allison House (Appendix A - 908-10).<sup>128</sup> The construction date is

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<sup>126</sup> Smith, Tears and Laughter, 10.

<sup>127</sup> Personal Communication, Ray Bonis, Assistant Archivist, James Branch Cabell Special Collections, Virginia Commonwealth University, February 1997.

<sup>128</sup> Personal Communication, Harry Kollatz, Jr., January 1997.

based on city directories. The house was demolished in the 1960s to create a parking lot.

T.C. Williams, Jr., owned property on the north side of the 900 block of West Franklin Street, where a series of four Richardsonian Romanesque-inspired rowhouses were built ca. 1893 (Figure 23). Williams may have developed these houses on speculation, though two of the lots were deeded to local builder Gilbert Hunt.<sup>129</sup> Hunt may have been the contractor for the four. The houses are two-and-one-half stories in height and built on side-hall plans. The first floors are coursed rock-faced brownstone, while the upper stories are red pressed brick. Polygonal and round projecting bays alternate, starting at 924. The polygonal-bay houses (924 and 928) also have gable wall dormers set against a flat "French" roof. The round-bay houses (926 and 930) have polygonal dormers set into the flat roof. The house at 924 West Franklin Street was occupied by S. M. Goodman, of Goodman Bros. & Co., bark dealers. J.E. Kearney, tobacconist, occupied 926 West Franklin. J. Scott Parrish, assistant manager of the Richmond Cedar Works, a major barrel and container manufacturing business, occupied 928. The Parrishes owned a country house, Minibora, in Chesterfield County. The Chesterfield Apartments at 900 West Franklin Street was commissioned by J. Scott Parrish in 1902-03 (Figure 4). In 1922, Parrish commissioned a major Mediterranean-inspired residence by William Lawrence Bottomley at 2315 Monument

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<sup>129</sup> Carneal, Richmond's Fan District, 158.

Avenue.<sup>130</sup> Number 930 West Franklin Street was the home of Edwin D. Starke, of Starke's Dixie Plow Works.

The lot at the northeast corner of Franklin and Harrison was developed ca. 1893 for William J. Whitehurst. The house was built in the Richardsonian Romanesque style (Figure 24). It is two-and-one-half stories high with a conical-roofed corner tower, second-floor triple-arched gallery and half-story wall dormer with a Palladian window. The first floor is rock-faced brownstone and the upper floors are red pressed-brick. The belt course above the gallery and various details are of brownstone.

Whitehurst started his career in the interior finishes business with J.J. Montague (of 811). Whitehurst then formed the partnership Whitehurst & Owens, manufacturers of sashes, blinds, and interior finishes. The interior of the Whitehurst House contains well-preserved examples of period finishes, including extensive amounts of wood and tilework.

Around 1892 or 1893, a house (Figure 25) was built for Poitiaux Robinson and his wife Annie Maury Robinson adjacent to the Dunlop House (Appendix A - 816, formerly numbered as 818). Robinson started his career as a book-keeper for Joseph G. Dill Company, manufacturers of plug tobacco. Robinson worked his way up in the firm. The house is a mixed style, combining Palladian Neoclassicism and Colonial Revival elements under a gambrel roof with cross-gambrel. The three-bay-wide, two-and-one-half story house was built on a side-hall plan. The windows of the first floor are crowned with triangular pediments, those of the second floor exhibit

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<sup>130</sup> Wilson, "Monument Avenue, Richmond, Virginia," 273.

segmentally arched pediments, and the half story features a Palladian window. The house was originally number 818-1/2 West Franklin Street, but it is now simply 818. It is one of only two buildings on the 800 block not owned by VCU.<sup>131</sup>

A house exhibiting vaguely similar form and certain similar details was built for Mary Pegram Anderson starting in 1893 (Appendix A - 920). The house was designed by Richmond architect Benjamin West Poindexter who was in partnership with Charles K. Bryant at the time.<sup>132</sup> Anderson House at 920 West Franklin Street was built as a three-bay-wide, two-and-one-half-story house on a side-hall plan. A front gambrel rimmed in copper is set against a flat copper-clad roof. The facade is of beige pressed-brick with brownstone details, including a full-width one story porch supported by paired colonnettes with Sullivanesque cushion capitals. The second floor round-topped windows are surmounted by brownstone keystones. At the third floor level is a Palladian window of carved stone, with a carved stone fan in place of a fanlight. The window is flanked by carved paterae motifs, also present at the apex of the gable.

Mary Pegram Anderson was the second wife and widow of Joseph R. Anderson of Tredegar Iron Works. Mrs. Anderson had been known and well respected as Miss Pegram prior to her marriage in the early 1880s. She was described as "slight in stature, but very erect, and possessing unusual distinction of manner and speech, no one who ever saw this dear lady of the old regime...could ever forget her appearance

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<sup>131</sup> The other non-VCU structure is a 1950s church building at 824 West Franklin Street (Figure 16).

<sup>132</sup> Richmond, Pride of Virginia, 95.

and striking personality.”<sup>133</sup> Mrs. Anderson purchased the property at 920 West Franklin in December 1892. In November, she had sold the Anderson House at 113 West Franklin Street to Lewis Ginter. The earlier antebellum Anderson home was considered to be “one of the largest and most attractive private residences in the city....[with] grounds laid off in a very tasty manner.”<sup>134</sup>

Ginter acquired the Anderson House at 113 West Franklin in order to erect the Jefferson Hotel in its place. The hotel, designed by the New York firm of Carrere and Hastings, opened in 1895. Mary Pegram Anderson spent 1893 in residence at 1007 West Grace Street while her house at 920 West Franklin was under construction. Mrs. Anderson moved in to her new home in 1894.

By the spring of 1894, a house was underway for James W. Allison, partner in the fertilizer company of Addison & Allison. The house was the first fully developed manifestation of the Colonial Revival on West Franklin, and possibly in Richmond. It was designed by New York City architects Griffin & Randall who started designing the house in 1893.<sup>135</sup> The house may have been a response to the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, where the adoption of classical forms was promoted with the notion of the “White City.”

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<sup>133</sup> Munford, Richmond Homes and Memories, 35.

<sup>134</sup> “The Finest Residences.”

<sup>135</sup> Drawings located in James Branch Cabell Special Collections, Virginia Commonwealth University. See Bonis and Zimmerman, Web Site, for a thorough discussion of the architecture and history of Allison House.

Allison House was built nearly opposite Ginter House at 901 West Franklin Street. In its lightness and Classicism, Allison House is also the converse of Ginter House. Allison House is comparable in size to the largest dwellings on the street, including 901 and 806 West Franklin. Built on a center-hall plan, the five-bay-wide house is two-and-one-half stories in height, of pressed brick with a hipped slate roof. The projecting central bay contains a pediment/cross-gable with a cornice return supported by brick pilasters with Ionic capitals. The central window is surmounted by a broken segmental arched pediment. The semi-circular portico is supported by Composite columns. The front door is surmounted by a fanlight. A peculiar feature of this house is the treatment of the first-floor windows. The rectangular hung windows are flanked by smaller side-lights. Scrolled broken pediments are set into semi-elliptical "niches" that crown the windows.

Much like the effect of Ginter House (901) begun six years earlier, Allison House would eventually influence later house design along Monument Avenue and beyond. The effect of Allison's Colonial Revival house was not as immediate and pervasive as Ginter's introduction of the Richardsonian Romanesque. The subsequent use of the Colonial Revival idiom may have in fact had more to do with the Jamestown Exposition of 1907 than with the Allison House.

Like Ginter, Allison was unable to enjoy his house for long. The house was completed in 1896 and Allison died in 1898. Allison left a young widow, Minnie Allison, and a young son, James. James Allison played an important role in the development of West Franklin Street Campus for RPI. Allison offered his father's home to the school in 1938. The terms of the deal stipulated that the university would put \$1,500.00 down

and pay the same amount per year for 29 years, allowing RPI to acquire another important building for the growing campus.<sup>136</sup>

In contrast to the Colonial Revival house being constructed at the other end of the block, during the summer of 1894, another Richardsonian Romanesque style house was under construction. Stephen Putney made his fortune in the wholesale shoe and boot business. Putney lived in a large antebellum house in the Court End section of Richmond until buying property at 921 West Franklin Street (Appendix A -921). Putney purchased the land from Ella Williams (of 816) in May, 1894, and from Charlotte and James Kearney in June of the same year. The local architect Albert T. Hunt was commissioned to design a townhouse in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Like many of his neighbors' houses, Putney's house was built on a side-hall plan and had a projecting semi-circular tower. Local stonemason William R. Mason, of the partnership Mason & Sim, executed the stonework.<sup>137</sup> The dark brownstone was laid in alternating smooth and rock-faced bands. A Palladian window is also incorporated into the facade, indicating the diversification of influences on local architects.

After Allison House was completed in 1896, a decade-long lapse in new residential construction would ensue. There were, however, numerous home-owners who would undertake major renovations on their properties after the turn of the century. A major change in the streetscape would come with the clearance of a frame house at the northwest corner of Franklin and Shafer. In its place was erected the first

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<sup>136</sup> Bonis and Zimmerman, Web site.

<sup>137</sup> Richmond, Pride of Virginia, 107.



large-scale apartment building on the block and in Richmond, The Chesterfield (900 West Franklin Street; Muhlenburg Bros. with Noland & Baskervill, 1903 [Figure 4]). The Chesterfield was developed for J. Scott Parrish, of 928 West Franklin and Miniborya in Chesterfield County. The Chesterfield Apartments were allegedly built for the convenience of Parrish's mother-in-law during her visits to Virginia.<sup>138</sup> The Italian Renaissance-inspired Chesterfield is seven stories high and built of brown brick over a steel frame. The stuccoed coved cornice and top floor is ornamented with garland pendants. In addition to its luxury apartments, the Chesterfield contained a tea room that was a popular social gathering place well into the twentieth century.

Starting in 1902, local architects Noland and Baskervill achieved a monopoly on renovation and new construction of the street with few exceptions. Noland and Baskervill had been the consulting architects on the Chesterfield Apartments. They had also won the competition to design the new Beth Ahabah synagogue (1111 West Franklin Street [Figure 26]) that would be erected just two blocks west in 1904. Their first single-family dwelling commission came from Ashton Starke who sought to remodel his house in 1902 (Appendix A - 915). The major alterations to the house were performed on both the interior and the exterior. Noland and Baskervill designed a new portico that features octagonal columns composed of alternating bands of brick and stone dies, based on the French Order of the sixteenth-century French master Philibert

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<sup>138</sup> Personal Communication, Harry Kollatz, Jr., January, 1997. Based on Kollatz's research in the Chesterfield Apartments Papers, the Valentine Museum, Richmond, Virginia.

de l'Orme.<sup>139</sup> A new dormer to match the existing single dormer with lancet windows was also added. Noland and Baskervill lightened the 1885 interior with neo-Classical elements. Little is known about the state of the house prior to Noland and Baskervill's designs for the renovation, but copies of the architects' renovation drawings are located in Cabell Special Collections for further study.

In 1903, the oldest extant house on the block, 821, was bought by Mrs. Belle Hickok of Baltimore, Maryland (Appendix A -821; Figure 3). Mrs. Hickok's niece had acquired the property the year before and quickly transferred it to her aunt. At the turn of the century, the Italianate Villa must have looked considerably outdated among its high Victorian neighbors. Mrs. Hickok set out to thoroughly remodel the house in the Georgian Revival style of the Colonial Revival. Between 1903 and 1910, the roof was replaced, windows altered, interiors gutted and replaced with new fixtures.

In 1904, Noland and Baskervill were again employed for the alterations to the L.C. Younger House. By 1904, the 1891 house was occupied by Spottswood Dabney Crenshaw. Crenshaw was a Richmond native, educated at the University of Virginia in general, industrial, analytical and agricultural chemistry.<sup>140</sup> Crenshaw was in the chemical business in New York for five years prior to settling in Richmond. In Richmond, Crenshaw ran a successful chemical enterprise, manufacturing acids and fertilizers. Other involvements included presidency of the Sulfur Mining and Railroad

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<sup>139</sup> Christopher Novelli observes that the architect's use of the de l'Orme French Order ties the renovations to the Gothic-styled Victorian house into the French Renaissance tradition revived in the American Renaissance. Novelli, "William C. Noland and Residential Design of Richmond's West Franklin Street," 23.

<sup>140</sup> Lyon, Men of Mark, vol. 5, 74-75.

Company, the Bank of Louisa, taking part in forming the Virginia-Carolina Chemical Company, and presidency of the Commonwealth Club. Crenshaw was an innovator in his field, creating a new process for manufacturing sulfuric acid that would revolutionize the acid manufacturing process. The first furnace for the process was developed in Richmond.<sup>141</sup> The wealth acquired from his successful chemical business enabled him to purchase the townhouse on West Franklin Street.

Noland and Baskervill's alterations to the Younger-Crenshaw House incorporated Greek Doric detailing into the portico and cornice. Whatever the original cornice style, it was replaced by a massive copper cornice complete with metopes, triglyphs and cresting. The portico consists of Doric fluted columns of limestone with an oversize cornice. Notable interior alterations included the addition of a smoking room to the rear with a leaded glass wall.

The first new house designed by Noland and Baskervill to be built in the neighborhood was 913 West Franklin Street. It was also the first new construction on the 800 or 900 blocks since the start of the Allison and Putney houses in 1894. The civil engineer E.T.D. Myers, Jr. and his wife Grace purchased the lot in 1906 from the heirs of Lewis Ginter. Soon after, the Myers negotiated a plan from Noland and Baskervill. The three-story, side-hall plan Colonial Revival townhouse was designed in 1907. The Jamestown Exposition, celebrating the colonial past, took place that same year, and could have influenced Noland and Baskervill's design. E.T.D. Myers, Jr., was involved in a number of major local building projects as Superintendent of

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<sup>141</sup> Lyon, Men of Mark, vol. 5, 74-75.

Construction. He was hired by New York architecture firm Clinton and Russell to oversee work on their Mutual Assurance Society building at the southeast corner of Main and Ninth streets in 1904. He later negotiated with his former employers to design the Protestant Episcopal Church Home at Grove and Vine. Myers was the head of the Men's Board of Corporators for the home. Grace Myers served on the Ladies Board of Managers.<sup>142</sup> The Myerses occupied their new home in 1908. Only six years later, in January, 1914, the Myers sold the house to Col. Henry W. Anderson. Anderson was a partner in the law firm Munford, Hunton, Williams, and Anderson. Anderson recommissioned Noland and Baskervill to alter the interior spaces of the house in 1914.

The same year that the Myerses moved into the neighborhood (1908), a house was begun for Frederic W. Scott, a local financier (Figure 27). The Scott-Bocock House was also designed by Noland and Baskervill, whose preliminary drawings are dated 1906. The design adheres to French Renaissance and neo-Classical idioms promoted in part in the American Renaissance tradition. The seven-bay-wide, two-story facade is clad in limestone and a profusion of terra cotta ornament. Consoles, pendants, garlands, and modillions adorn the facade. A two-story portico is supported by limestone Corinthian columns. Like the other larger, detached dwellings of the 800 and 900 blocks (Appendix A - 806, 821, 827, 901, 908-10), 909 West Franklin Street was built on a center-hall plan. A hierarchy of materials was also used in the Scott-Bocock

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<sup>142</sup> Kerri Culhane, "A Future in the Past: Historic Housing for the Elderly Reopens as the *Columns on Grove*," (A paper presented to the Richmond Better Housing Coalition, Richmond, Virginia, December, 1996).

House. The facade exhibits a rich and complex ornamentation, while the other elevations, particularly the service entrance, are not so densely embellished. The service wing is faced in buff brick, as opposed to the limestone and terracotta facing of the front elevation. Scott had owned another house at 712 West Franklin Street fronting Monroe Park. The earlier house was built ca. 1883 and in a similar manner of style and execution as the Saunders House (827). The earlier Scott House at 712 West Franklin Street was owned by RPI and used as a men's dormitory. It was demolished and replaced with the high-rise dormitory, Rhoads Hall. Scott worked for the brokerage firm Thomas Branch & Co., but left to form Scott and Stringfellow, a brokerage firm still in existence in Richmond. Number 909 West Franklin Street is still owned by the estate of Scott descendent Elisabeth Scott Bocock. It is leased by VCU.

In May of 1909 Caroline C. Wise, a widow, acquired property at the southeast corner of Franklin and Harrison. Local architects Noland and Baskervill were commissioned to design an apartment building for the site (Appendix A - 923). Noland and Baskervill's 1909 drawings for the Berkeley Apartments indicate that the original building was only to rise three stories in keeping with the scale of its immediate neighbors (Figure 28). As it was built, the three-bay-wide, brick Colonial Revival building at 923 West Franklin Street rises five stories at the southeast corner of Franklin and Harrison. It is not yet known when or why the plans were modified.

The Berkeley Apartments was the fourth apartment house on West Franklin, following the much larger Chesterfield (901 West Franklin Street; Muhlenburg Brothers with Noland and Baskervill, 1903 [Figure 4]), Raleigh (1001 West Franklin Street; Aubrey Chesterman, 1907 [Figure 29]) and Gresham Court Apartments (1030 West

Franklin Street; Carneal & Johnston, 1909 [Figure 30]). Soon to follow was Monroe Terrace (801 West Franklin Street; Alfred C. Bossom, 1912-15), Franklin Terrace (Appendix A - 812-814 West Franklin Street; ca. 1925 [Figure 32]), and the Prestwould (West Franklin Street at Pine, Alfred C. Bossom, 1927 [Figure 31]). The ease and elegance of apartment living was quickly supplanting the earlier fashion of ostentatious mansion building. Apartments required far less upkeep, thus freeing the inhabitants to lead a fulfilling social life. The apartment life also appealed to those part-time inhabitants of the city who found southern winters mild, but summers at the springs or abroad far more enjoyable than the oppressive heat of Richmond.

Following the erection of Berkeley Apartments was the significantly larger Monroe Terrace Apartments, overlooking Monroe Park at the southwest corner of Franklin and Laurel. New York architect Alfred C. Bossom's initial drawings for the Monroe Terrace Apartments are dated August, 1912, with a number of revisions following suit.<sup>143</sup> Building the apartments meant relocating the existing structure, the 1871 Ordway-Skinker House (Figure 6). The modest frame house (the only remaining frame dwelling on the street) was wrenched from its foundations and carted to a new location at 3607 Chamberlayne Avenue.<sup>144</sup> Monroe Terrace was built in 1915. Each of its 11 floors (above the first floor lobby) contained four large apartments with all the appointments of the finest houses.

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<sup>143</sup> Copies of Drawings located in James Branch Cabell Library Special Collections, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>144</sup> The Ordway-Skinker House stood at its North Side location until burning in January 1997. Jim Mason, "Chamberlayne house burns," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 7 January 1997: B1.

Built at a time when apartment buildings were eclipsing single-family mansions, 810 West Franklin Street was the last single residence built on the 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street. Plans for the Eppa Hunton, Jr. House were drawn by Noland and Baskervill in 1914 (Appendix A - 810).<sup>145</sup> Despite its late date (it was occupied in 1916), Hunton House is one of the grander structures along the 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street. Hunton House is in the American Renaissance style, three and one half stories in height, faced in smooth limestone with carved ornament. The full-width porch is supported by columns and square posts with Corinthian capitals. The tripartite bow windows are framed by rinceaux. The second floor window is surmounted by a pediment supported by consoles. The half story frieze is pierced with rectangular windows and runs below the dentil band and modillion cornice. A balustrade runs along the perimeter of the roof, fencing what was originally a roof garden.

The interior detailing in this side-hall plan dwelling relies primarily on the Corinthian order and variations on such; the current doctoral seminar room contains the most vivid examples of ornate plaster and woodwork. The carved mahogany balusters of the stairs are embellished hierarchically, from the most elaborate carvings and detailing on the first floor, gradually simplifying over the second and third floors, to the basic square balusters of the top story.

Eppa Hunton, Jr., was a partner in Munford, Hunton, Williams and Anderson, a law firm known today as Hunton and Williams. Partner Henry Anderson bought the nearby Colonial Revival Myers House in 1914 and hired Noland and Baskervill to

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<sup>145</sup> Dated drawings by the architects are reproduced in Novelli, "William C. Noland and Residential Design on Richmond's West Franklin Street."

design alterations (Appendix A - 913). This may have influenced Hunton's choice of locale.

Nearly ten years after Hunton House was completed, the last residential structure was built on West Franklin Street. Around 1924, the Williams House at 816 West Franklin Street was razed (Figure 5). Following the demolition of the second-oldest extant house on the street,<sup>146</sup> the north side of the 800 block was renumbered. The Dunlop-Harrison House at 818 became 816, and the site of the original 816 (Williams House) became 812-14. In place of the massive Italianate mansion was built Franklin Terrace Apartments, the first and only example of the Spanish Eclectic style of architecture to appear along West Franklin Street (Appendix A - 812-14 [Figure 32]). Despite its uniqueness, it would not have seemed out of place on a street renowned for the diversity of its architecture. The Franklin Terrace Apartments were built of stuccoed brick, four stories in height. Its seven-bay symmetrical facade has two projecting bays with balconies on the third floor shaded by pent pantiled roofs. The fourth-floor balconies each include a three part arcade under the gable of each bay. At the corners of the roof are what appear to be false parapets of stucco over brick accented with exposed brick headers, possibly mimicking bell-towers. The original roof would have had orange Spanish tiles, though they have been replaced with orange composition shingles. A 1934 advertisement for the apartment building described the availability of "Two Rooms, Kitchenette and Bath, to

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<sup>146</sup> The oldest extant house at that time, and today, is the Ritter-Hickok House, 821 West Franklin Street.



Five Rooms and Bath” and mentions the first floor’s “Beautiful Parlors and Lounge,” and the tea room and complete dining facilities.<sup>147</sup>

The proximity of Franklin Street to downtown, running east and west from the center of the city, had made that street one of the choicest areas for residential development. While some of the finest homes in Richmond were located along Franklin Street west of downtown, the threat of encroachment of commercial development created a market for up-scale residential development even farther west.

The Franklin Street boom was short lived, as was the desirability of the West Franklin Street address. In 1906 and 1914 the city annexed large tracts of Henrico County to the west and development began leapfrogging out to these new areas. Monument Avenue soon supplanted West Franklin Street as the address of choice. By the 1920s, wealthy residents were moving even farther west, to estate developments like Windsor Farms.

Coinciding with the construction of the last residential structure on the 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street was the development of West Franklin Street into the William and Mary Extension Campus. In 1925, the Saunders-Willard House (Appendix A - 827) became the first building acquired by the extension, marking an eventual shift along these two blocks from upscale residential neighborhood to University campus.

The location was advantageous to the small school. Ginter House had been transformed into the public library, allowing the students access to books and

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<sup>147</sup> Four Arts Magazine, September 1934. Clipping in the Franklin Terrace file, James Branch Cabell Special Collections, Virginia Commonwealth University.

educational materials that the school did not own. By 1931, Ginter House was purchased by the William and Mary Extension. During the 1930s, the Works Project Administration (WPA) was funding renovations and additions to the historic homes to provide dormitory and classroom space. Over the years, selective demolition and inappropriate alterations to the historic houses have threatened the character and texture of the neighborhood. The historic buildings of the 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street are essential to understanding Richmond history and the history of Virginia Commonwealth University. Those that have survived the demolition campaigns of the 1950s deserve protection and sensitive rehabilitation to ensure their existence into the next century.

## **Chapter IV -- Recommendations for a Preservation Plan**

The variety of styles manifested along the 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street is remarkable: Second Empire, American Renaissance, Queen Anne, and Richardsonian Romanesque, to name a few. These mansions line the main thoroughfare of what was once one of Richmond's wealthiest neighborhoods, populated by Richmond's elite and built with the tobacco, manufacturing, and trade money that pulled Richmond out of the Reconstruction-era economic slump. These buildings are significant material evidence of Richmond's economic recovery in the Reconstruction South, and how this new-found prosperity was vividly reflected through architecture.

West Franklin Street enjoyed its status as the preeminent residential address of Richmond for little over two generations. The development of Monument Avenue eclipsed West Franklin Street by the first quarter of the twentieth century. The depression dealt the final blow to the neighborhood as a residential area, but allowed for the adaptive reuse of the houses as the building blocks for the development of Virginia Commonwealth University's West Campus.

After 1925, many of the buildings came into the hands of the William and Mary Extension, which evolved into the Richmond Professional Institute (RPI), and what is today Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). These historic buildings form the core of the West Campus of the university. West Franklin Street is VCU's equivalent of the

University of Virginia's Lawn. As such the buildings should be "curated" and maintained at a level reflecting their significance. The ornate woodwork, ceramic tile, art glass, cast iron, and stonework are integral to buildings of the period and their historical value is immeasurable (Figures 33, 34, 35). A preservation plan would seek to arrest deterioration by standardizing guidelines for necessary alterations that would be sensitive to the existing historic fabric, while attempting to make compatible the current uses, classroom and office space, with historic character.

The historic structures of the 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street have nearly all been continually occupied, and now many have served more time as institutional structures than as private residences. These buildings are important to VCU as they form a distinct physical identity for the campus. Additionally, they represent the roots of the William & Mary Extension and its gradual development into Virginia Commonwealth University. These buildings are significant for the roles they played as symbols of post-Reconstruction prosperity in Richmond, and as symbols of the development of Virginia Commonwealth University.

While the historic houses of VCU have provided much needed classroom and dormitory space, remodelings were not always sensitive to the historic nature of the buildings. Many important decorative features were lost or irrevocably damaged in the conversion process. With hindsight, we can see the errors of alterations that were carried out with haste. Now, however, with improvements in building and conservation technologies, care can and must be taken in sensitively adapting these historic houses to their educational purposes.

This chapter will review the literature generated by VCU's master planning process that specifically addresses the West Franklin Street Corridor or threatens the existing streetscape. Other relevant documents that address or pertain to the preservation of the 800 and 900 blocks will be discussed. The potential benefits to be derived from the proactive preservation of VCU's historic buildings will also be delineated. I will start by defining a number of technical terms in order to clarify this argument. **The Secretary of the Interior's Standards** are four distinct approaches to dealing with the sensitive treatment of historic properties. They include preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. Germane to VCU's properties is the standard for **rehabilitation**. As defined by the Secretary of the Interior, rehabilitation is "the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values (Appendix D)."<sup>148</sup> **Adaptive reuse** is the process of adapting a historic structure to a new use, while retaining the original structure's scale and character. In the case of VCU's buildings, this would mean adapting residential structures to educational classroom and office space while retaining the important architectural features of the historic buildings.

**The National Register of Historic Places** was established by the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, Part 36CFR60. It is an honorary designation of a property determined as having historic significance. The

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<sup>148</sup> Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment: Rehabilitation (36 CFR 67, Historic Preservation Certifications) Revised 1990. (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, 1995).

register is administered by the Department of the Interior. There are varying levels of significance, including local and national significance. Significance is also determined by association or by type of property. The West Franklin Street Historic District is significant for its architecture on a local level. The information now unearthed about the architects and patrons indicates the VCU architectural collection is of national significance. As a part of the NHPA of 1966, properties determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register are offered certain protections from negative impacts of state and federal undertakings. A review of the impact is made by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), an independent, presidentially appointed body in Washington, D.C.

In Richmond, the **Commission of Architectural Review (CAR)** is a local board consisting of appointees from a variety of disciplines who decide on design and appropriateness issues in areas officially designated as **Old and Historic Districts**. Exterior alterations such as paint color and removal or addition of architectural elements are reviewed by the CAR. **Heritage tourism** refers to the increasingly popular phenomenon of vacationers choosing to visit sites of historic and cultural significance. Heritage tourism is growing in popularity, especially in states like Virginia, where special programs are sponsored by the Board of Tourism in conjunction with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

### **National Register and Historic District Status**

The 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street are encompassed in the West Franklin Street National Register Historic District. That nomination, authored in 1972,

represents the last attempt to thoroughly survey the architecture and history of the area.<sup>149</sup> The nomination cites

the 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street [as providing] a rich and unique setting for the core of the Virginia Commonwealth University campus. Not only do the buildings give the student an insight into the atmosphere of one of the most prominent quarters of Richmond during the 1890s, but they provide a fine architectural handbook of late-nineteenth and early twentieth century styles.<sup>150</sup>

The "district" designation makes imperative the preservation of all of the standing structures that contribute positively to the district. A district is only successful if the buildings of which it is comprised retain a consistent amount of integrity. The street was also designated a "preservation-zone," though such a designation lacks any force if it is not acted upon by the stewards of historic properties, in this case, VCU. Neither is listing on the National Register a guarantee of protection from inappropriate alterations or uses. The university as a state-owned entity would be subject to a review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 if it undertook a project that would negatively impact its historic buildings (such as demolition or major alteration). The university has avoided this review in the past by placing its buildings under the ownership of the private VCU Real Estate Foundation, which is not subject to such scrutiny. In such a case, only a local Old and Historic District designation would subject exterior alterations to formal review. The 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin, unfortunately, are not encompassed in any local historic districts. This serious

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<sup>149</sup> Virginia Landmarks Commission Staff, West Franklin Street National Register Historic District Nomination (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1972).

<sup>150</sup> Virginia Landmarks Commission Staff, West Franklin Street National Register Historic District Nomination, 2.

omission exempts VCU from review by the city's Commission of Architectural Review (CAR). Consequently, destructive and inappropriate alterations continue to be made to the exteriors. Inappropriate paint colors have been used on or in all of the buildings, including many of the most important houses (Appendix A - 901, 914 are two obvious examples). Fortunately, paint can be reversed. Lost or stolen architectural features, however, are not likely to be recovered. The cast-iron roof cresting on 806 West Franklin (Appendix A - 806) is a recent casualty (Figure 36). After standing relatively untouched for well over a century, it disappeared during the recent reflashing of the roof. If the university is unwilling to be subject to the CAR review process, it may be advantageous to form a university advisory panel to review alterations before grave errors are committed.

A critical issue that VCU needs to address in terms of major alterations to its historic buildings is that of accessibility and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Regardless of government-mandated accessibility, it should be a matter of policy for a university like VCU to open its doors to all students, faculty, and staff by creating a barrier-free environment. It is possible and imperative to adapt historic structures for optimal accessibility. A publication sponsored by the Association of Physical Plant Administrators of Universities and Colleges, Adapting Historic Campus Structures, presents a number of case studies of sensitively redesigned barrier-free entrances and interiors to historic buildings on campuses across the country.<sup>151</sup> Additionally, heightened awareness of the ADA and accessibility has

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<sup>151</sup> Margaret Milner, Adapting Historic Campus Structures for Accessibility (Washington, DC: Association of Physical Plant Administrators of Universities and Colleges, 1979).



generated a number of seminars and training programs available for physical plant administrators and facilities planners to help understand and comply with the federal regulations while being sensitive to the character of historic properties.

### **Representation in VCU Master Planning Documents**

Threats to the campus over the years have been both internal and external. The 1946 Master Plan of Richmond, for example, called for a highway to be paved through Monroe Park.<sup>152</sup> More menacing has been the internal threat by university administrations which maligned the historic buildings as inappropriate for educational use. The primary complaint was that the urban university did not look like the model of a suburban campus. Many mistakes were made by planners and architects trying to reform the university identity into a suburban model. Buildings that look like office-park architecture replaced those historic buildings of urban residential scale. One particularly tragic effect was the loss of important buildings that contributed positively to the area's character, in favor of now-dated "modern architecture" that makes no attempt to relate to the street. Other criticisms were the lack of space and modern conveniences afforded in the historic structures. This issue arose after hasty remodelings were undertaken to make the buildings immediately available for use.

Over the past three decades RPI and VCU have commissioned architects and planning professionals to create architectural guidelines and Master Plans for the continued growth of the University. All of the Master Planning documents generally evaluate the quality and context of historic structures and streetscapes. Only within the

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<sup>152</sup> Harland Bartholomew and Associates, 1946 Master Plan for Richmond (Richmond: City of Richmond, 1946).

past decade have the Master Plan guidelines become seriously sensitive to preserving historic character. These documents generally recommend the retention of the historic fabric and scale of the late nineteenth-century architecture along Franklin Street.<sup>153</sup>

Site plans created in 1966 by local architects Ballou & Justice called for the clearance of nearly all of the historic West Franklin Street structures (Figure 37). Marginal improvements were made in the 1970 plan, prepared jointly by local architects Glave, Newman and Anderson and New York-based planners Llewelyn-Davies. The survey of West Franklin Street recommended the retention of all of the historic buildings as essential to the townscape. All of the buildings were defined as potentially efficient for use if properly adapted. The phases of construction outlined in the subsequent document, however, contradicted these recommendations. By 1978, the plan called for the demolition of a number of historic buildings. It was proposed that houses of 916-922 and 913-923 West Franklin Street be demolished in order to connect new buildings through a series of “skyways” or enclosed elevated walkways, akin to a giant Habitrail (Figure 38).<sup>154</sup> Fortunately, either lack of funding or common sense prevailed in each instance.

Architectural guidelines were commissioned from Michael Dennis & Associates of Boston working with local firm Dewberry & Davis. The University Board of Visitors

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<sup>153</sup> Dewberry & Davis and Michael Dennis and Associates, General Plan and Guidelines including the Broad Street Corridor Study, (Richmond: VCU, 1995), and Marcellus Wright Cox and Smith, P.C., et al, VCU Master Site Plan, (Richmond: VCU, 1996).

<sup>154</sup> Glave, Newman, and Anderson and Llewelyn-Davies, Virginia Commonwealth University Master Plan, 1970. Habitrails are plastic systems of tunnels and tubes intended for gerbils and other pet rodents popular in the 1970s.

adopted these guidelines in 1995. The purpose of the General Plan and Guidelines, including the Broad Street Corridor Study, was "to examine the VCU campuses [West Academic Campus and MCV], determine what is good and bad about them, and recommend architectural standards and guidelines that will ensure development of the highest quality physical environment."<sup>155</sup> These guidelines acknowledged that "VCU campuses derive their unique character from their specific urban contexts..." and that the university should "exploit this urban quality....according to urban guidelines, not suburban guidelines."<sup>156</sup> The major flaw of the academic campus that the planners cited was the intrusion of suburban-type structures and incongruous development in the domestically-scaled streetscape. The threat of inappropriate development is to "disengage the campus from its surroundings."<sup>157</sup> The single most important urban goal....should be to reestablish....urban continuity."<sup>158</sup>

Historic buildings, regardless of age, are recommended for retention providing they contribute positively to the overall quality of the physical environment. The discussion of buildings on the State and National Registers and historic districts apply to West Franklin Street. Registry buildings must have every effort made to retain them.

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<sup>155</sup> Dewberry & Davis and Michael Dennis & Associates, General Plan and Guidelines including the Broad Street Corridor Study, 1.

<sup>156</sup> Dewberry & Davis and Michael Dennis & Associates, General Plan and Guidelines including the Broad Street Corridor Study, 2.

<sup>157</sup> Dewberry & Davis and Michael Dennis & Associates, General Plan and Guidelines including the Broad Street Corridor Study, 3.

<sup>158</sup> Dewberry & Davis and Michael Dennis & Associates, General Plan and Guidelines including the Broad Street Corridor Study, 4.

Additionally, in districts, where quality and manner of execution may vary but overall urban texture is of high quality, "unnecessary demolition, inappropriate alterations or construction should be prohibited."<sup>159</sup> Nowhere on the VCU Academic campus is the recommendation for districts and register properties more applicable than on Franklin Street, "[which]....simultaneously demonstrates extreme continuity and extreme variation. This is possible because of the interrelationship of buildings, landscape and civic space."<sup>160</sup> According to the 1995 guidelines, Franklin Street can be seen as the model of urban continuity for which VCU should strive (Figure 39).

The 1996 Master Site Plan was prepared by Marcellus Wright Cox and Smith Architects, P.C., of Richmond in concert with other architects, planners, and engineers. Envisioned in this plan is the "Academic Campus, 2005." Centered around Monroe Park, the James Branch Cabell Library, and Franklin Street, this core "will see significant renovation, reconfiguration and preservation of these....facilities, many of them historic....Deliberate investment in landscape and streetscape improvements should continue. No other single factor will be as effective in establishing a consistent, recognizable and high quality campus."<sup>161</sup> The 1996 Master Site Plan states explicitly that "VCU's historic structures are among its most valuable physical resources. While they contribute immeasurably to the quality and ambience of the campuses, they do

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<sup>159</sup> Dewberry & Davis and Michael Dennis & Associates, General Plan and Guidelines including the Broad Street Corridor Study, 5.

<sup>160</sup> Dewberry & Davis and Michael Dennis & Associates, General Plan and Guidelines including the Broad Street Corridor Study, 3.

<sup>161</sup> Marcellus Wright Cox and Smith, P.C., et al, 1996 Master Site Plan, 6-7.

present challenges."<sup>162</sup> Recommendations are then made for the possible "disposal" of certain historic structures due to inefficiencies and expense. The discussion of "modern facilities," built within the past thirty years, indicated a number of deficiencies and maintenance problems facing these "newer" structures as well. Inexplicably, no call for their demolition and replacement is made, nor are they cited as invaluable as the historic buildings.

While the planning documents and guidelines do provide some measure of general consideration for historic structures, often the praise couches intentions for "replacement" of older buildings. The plans and guidelines are not explicit enough to provide the protection that could be offered through the creation of a concise preservation plan. The preservation plan would draw upon the salient points of the architectural guidelines and the 1996 Master Plan, and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment and Rehabilitation which define specific steps in the treatment and physical rehabilitation of a building. The preservation plan would have to be agreed upon and adhered to by the university Board of Visitors, University Architect, and the Department of the Physical Plant as a standard guideline for the maintenance and care of VCU's historic structures.

### **Recommendations for Preservation**

Time and again the importance of the historic structures has been reaffirmed both as remnants of the historic fabric of the city and as individualized centers of learning. Though the buildings have not always been successfully adapted for their

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<sup>162</sup> Marcellus Wright Cox and Smith Architects, P.C. et al, 1996 Master Site Plan, 20.

new uses, that is not to say that they cannot be efficiently reused. Creative solutions can be made while taking into account the historic nature of the structures and of the equally important examples of period decorative arts contained therein.

The following recommendations are made to the university in order that the administration will recognize the value of well-preserved historic buildings and take the appropriate steps in achieving that goal.

**1. Thorough assessment of building conditions and inventory of interior and exterior architectural and decorative elements.** In order to protect its resources the university must assess its architectural holdings and prioritize maintenance and rehabilitation needs. An accounting of all the elements through intensive architectural survey and photo documentation will make it harder for items to "disappear" as they have in the past.

**2. Creation of an Advisory Panel consisting of local professionals, university staff, the University Architect, and representatives of the Physical Plant Department and Board of Visitors.** This panel would focus on both interior and exterior alterations. CAR does not consider interior alterations, so the VCU advisory panel would perform this essential review.

**3. Application for local Old and Historic District status.** This would ensure objective architectural review for exterior work.

**4. Adoption of and adherence to standard professional guidelines for treatment and rehabilitation of VCU's historic buildings.** These guidelines would be formulated taking into account Architectural Guidelines and Master Planning documents formulated for the university. Additionally, the Secretary of the Interior's

Standards for Treatment, specifically Rehabilitation, should be formally adopted as working guidelines to ensure the protection of these important cultural resources (Appendix D).

**5. Training physical plant workers and maintenance personnel in sensitive rehabilitation and restoration techniques.** Following the University of Virginia model, it is possible and profitable to train existing personnel in restoration and rehabilitation techniques in order to effectively maintain historic buildings. Benefits include the cost savings of using in-house personnel rather than hiring outside professionals. The investment in the skills of university employees is essential in maintaining the experienced and professional staff required when dealing with historic properties.

#### **Benefits to the University**

The benefit to the University is multifold. According to David Brown, former executive director of the Preservation Alliance of Virginia, "the singular underlying reality is that preservation means dollars in the pockets of Virginians in every corner of the Commonwealth."<sup>163</sup> Economically, the assessed values of the structures would increase significantly if appropriately rehabilitated. There is also a growing body of evidence to suggest that rehabilitation pays off in more ways than assessed values. In Virginia alone, heritage tourism attracts nearly three-quarters (73%) of first-time visitors to the state. According to the Preservation Alliance's statistics, "Historic Preservation Visitors stayed longer, visited twice as many places and spent on average two-and-a-

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<sup>163</sup> Virginia's Economy and Historic Preservation: The Impact of Preservation on Jobs, Business and Community (Staunton: Preservation Alliance of Virginia, 1996), 2.

half times more money in Virginia than did other visitors."<sup>164</sup> The success of the tour of the VCU campus by the Victorian Society in America in May, 1996, indicates the potential for the university's architectural resources to be an attraction of both local and national interest. The positive publicity generated by the rehabilitation of historic structures in this preservation-oriented period is invaluable.

VCU is the steward of an impressive number of significant historic properties, among them the buildings along West Franklin Street. As a university, VCU is committed to education. According to the document that defined the goals of the future Virginia Commonwealth University:

What distinguishes a university is not so much the degree of its endorsement of broad goals of higher education, but rather the nature of its more specific aims, resulting from its historical development, [and] its location....The evolving urban university of the future should exhibit the basic characteristics of a public institution located in and a living part of the metropolitan community.<sup>165</sup>

If the university were to take a proactive stance towards preservation, the buildings of the 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street could be used as a living classroom for any number of its current programs. Urban Studies and Planning, Architectural History, Art History, Crafts, Interior Design, and Engineering would all benefit from study of this unique cultural resource. The buildings themselves would benefit from research and documentation of their pasts and collective present.

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<sup>164</sup> Virginia's Economy and Historic Preservation: The Impact of Preservation on Jobs, Business and Community, 8.

<sup>165</sup> Report of the Commission to Plan for the Establishment of a Proposed State Supported University in the Richmond Metropolitan Area. (1967), 41. James Branch Cabell Special Collections, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia.



The architectural success of the 800 and 900 blocks is that it is the quintessential district. Though manner of execution and size varies, it is the juxtaposition of the array of styles that creates visual interest (Figure 39). When certain buildings in a district fall into disrepair or are destroyed, the entire district is compromised. Preservation of the buildings in the 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street is imperative to retain the historic fabric and unique character of this exceptional district.

## **Chapter V -- Conclusion**

Virginia Commonwealth University's architectural collection along the 800 and 900 Blocks of West Franklin Street is a cultural resource of singular importance. Unlike many other American architectural collections, such as Williamsburg and Winterthur, the buildings of West Franklin Street retain their original locations and urban contexts; they have not been rebuilt, relocated or rearranged. Few stewards of historic buildings, let alone state-owned universities, can claim the variety and breadth of architecture owned by VCU. Included in the streetscape is architecture from a seventy-year period, ranging from Italianate Villa to Second Empire, from Richardsonian Romanesque to American Renaissance, and from Colonial Revival to Spanish Eclectic. Few collections can claim so many intact examples of architecture in their original settings. Until now, little was known about the patrons, architects, builders, and craftsmen who were responsible for the development of the West Franklin Street neighborhood.

This thesis has established an accurate chronology for the development of the 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street. The original residents and architectural patrons of the houses have been identified, as have many of the architects and craftsmen who executed the designs and construction. Matching these buildings with patrons, architects and builders restores flesh to the architectural bones. These buildings and their collective histories tell the story of Richmond, 1855-1925, and of Virginia Commonwealth University, 1925 to present.

This thesis has sought to reaffirm the significance of the 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street by offering suggestions for the development of a university-adopted preservation plan. These buildings are only important if they are allowed to tell their stories. Stripped bare of their essential material evidence, their abilities to attest to their rich histories will be greatly diminished. If that is the case, we all lose a significant portion of the historical record. VCU, as an institution dedicated to knowledge and learning, must take the initiative to use these university-owned cultural resources towards that end. The recommendations include the establishment of an advisory panel to review alterations, seeking local Old and Historic District designation, the adoption of and adherence to standardized professional guidelines for ensuring careful rehabilitation, and the training of physical plant personnel to carry out sensitive restoration and rehabilitation work.

This thesis has made every attempt to be thorough in laying the groundwork for future research. The wealth of available evidence, both material and historical, deserves further detailed investigation. The buildings of West Franklin Street have volumes more to tell about their distinguished histories.

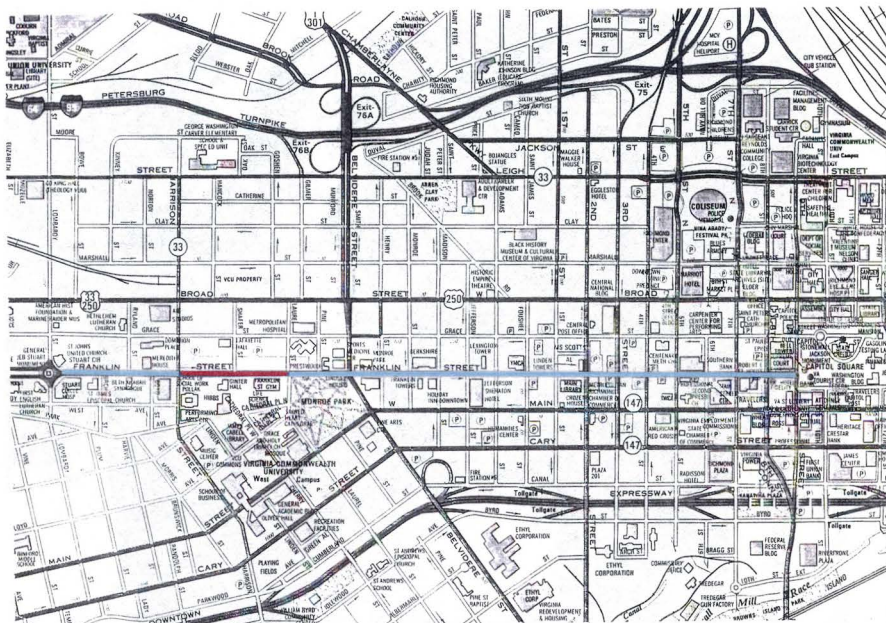


Figure 1. Map of Modern Richmond. Franklin Street — 800 and 900 blocks —



Figure 2. Monroe or Western Square as illustrated in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper (27 November 1858).



Figure 3. Ritter House, 821 West Franklin Street. Built 1855. Photo taken ca. 1881. (The Valentine Museum)



Figure 4. The Chesterfield Apartments, 900 West Franklin Street, 1902-03, and Parkinson House, 906 West Franklin Street, ca. 1893; demolished 1960s. (*James Branch Cabell Special Collections*)



Figure 5. West Franklin Streetscape, including the Williams House, 816 West Franklin Street, ca. 1869; demolished ca. 1924, Buek-Thurston House, 808 West Franklin Street, 1893-94. (*The Valentine Museum*)





Figure 6. The Ordway-Sinker House, 801 West Franklin Street, built ca. 1871. Relocated 1915 to Chamberlayne Avenue; destroyed by fire, 1997. (*The Valentine Museum*)



Figure 7. Ginter House, 901 West Franklin Street, during the 1890s  
(*The Valentine Museum*)



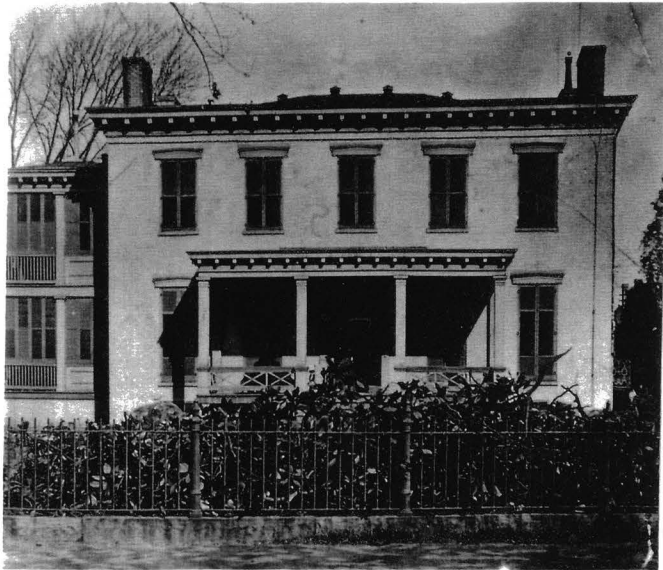


Figure 8. Cotton-Shafer House, 900 Park Avenue. Built 1817; demolished ca. 1905  
(*The Valentine Museum*)



Figure 9. Hirsh-Williams House, 824 West Franklin Street. William M. Poindexter, architect, 1889-91; demolished 1937. (*The Valentine Museum*)



Figure 10. West Franklin Streetscape, 800 block looking west from Laurel Street,  
Published in Picturesque Richmond, 1891.



Figure 11. West Franklin Streetscape, 800 block looking west, Published in Art Work of Richmond, 1897.



Figure 12. Barksdale House, 813 West Franklin Street. Built ca. 1887; demolished 1950s. (*James Branch Cabell Special Collections*)

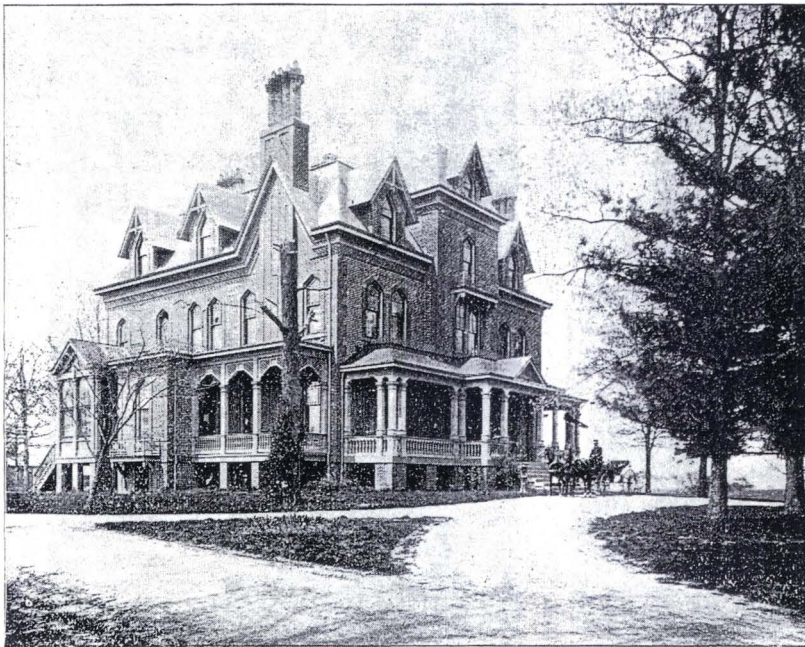


Figure 13. Laburnum, 1884-1885; destroyed by fire, 1906. Photo published in Richmond, Virginia: The City on the James.



Figure 14. Steinbrecher Building, 415 West Broad Street. Carl Ruehrmund, architect, 1915. Demolished 1980s.





Figure 15. 2 West Franklin Street. Albert L. West, architect, 1886. (Photo: Author)

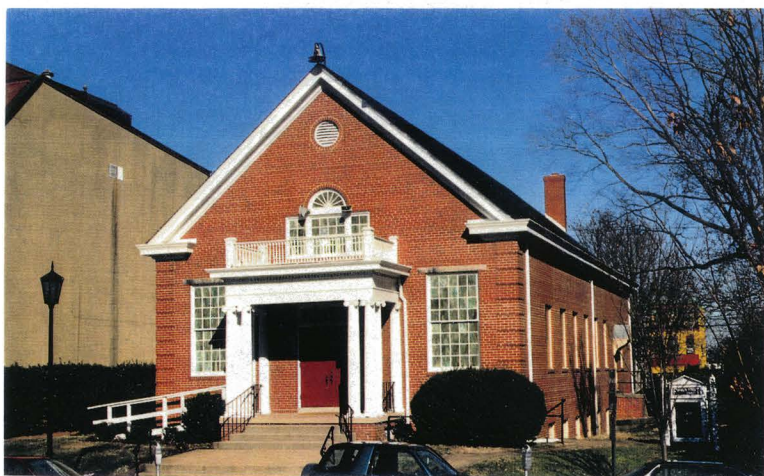


Figure 16. Modern church building, 824 West Franklin Street. (Photo: Author)

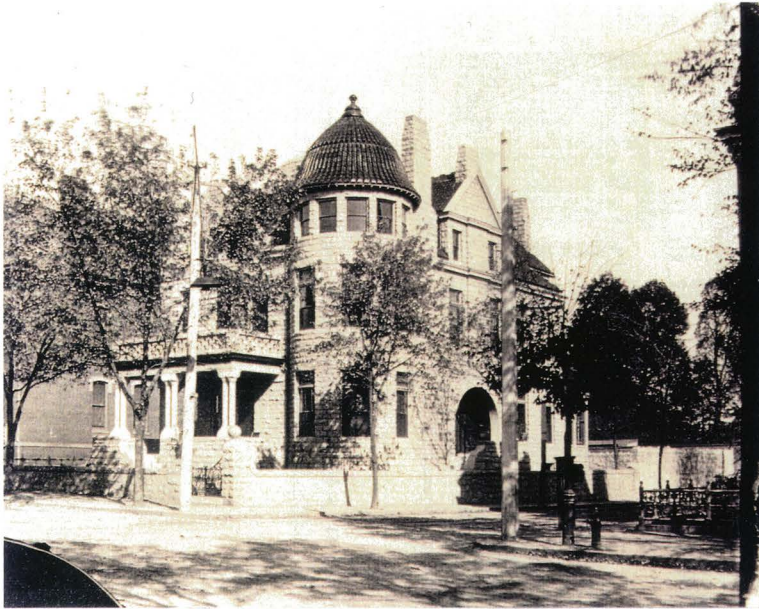
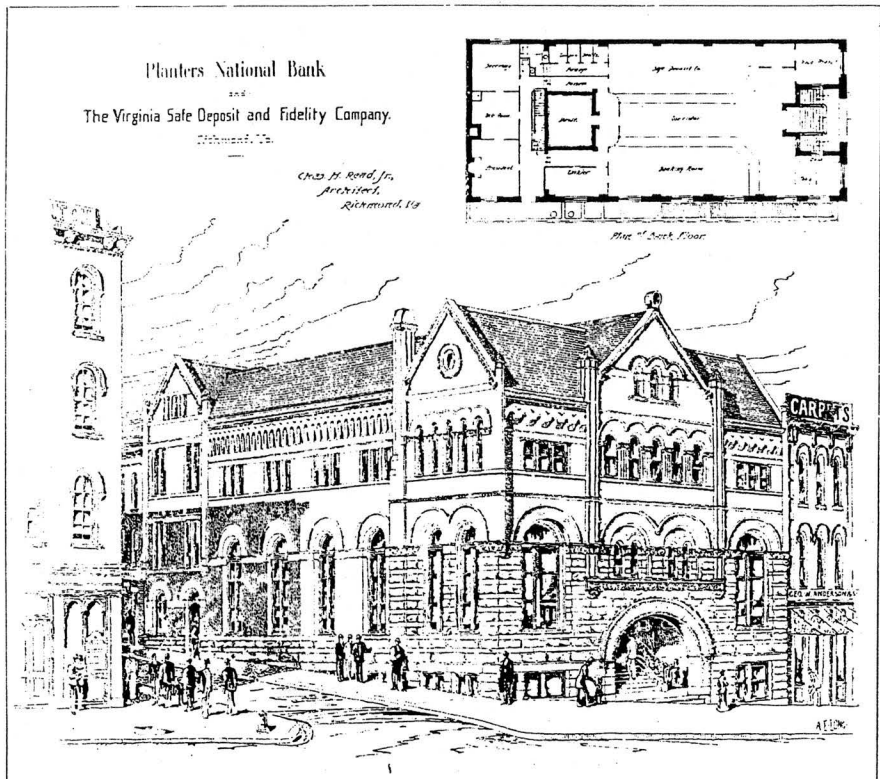


Figure 17. Jones-Williams House, 800 West Franklin Street. M.J. Dimmock, architect, 1890-91. Pre-conservatory addition (*The Valentine Museum*)



Figure 18. Richmond City Hall, 1001 East Broad Street. Elijah E. Myers, architect, 1887-1894. (Photo: Author)





Erected 1894.

Figure 19. Planter's National Bank, Main Street. Charles H. Read, Jr., architect, 1894. Illustrated in Charles H. Read Jr., Modern Buildings, 1900.

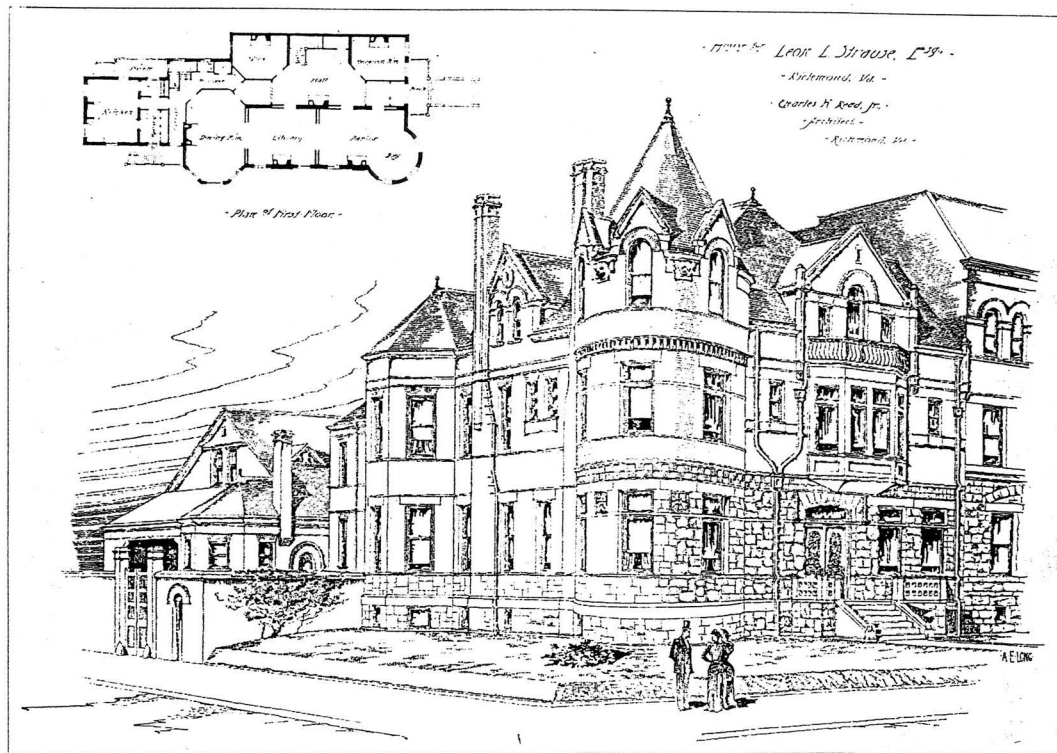


Figure 20. Residence designed for L.L. Strause, 826 West Franklin Street. Charles H. Read, Jr., architect, 1892. Illustrated in Charles H. Read, Jr., Modern Buildings, 1900.

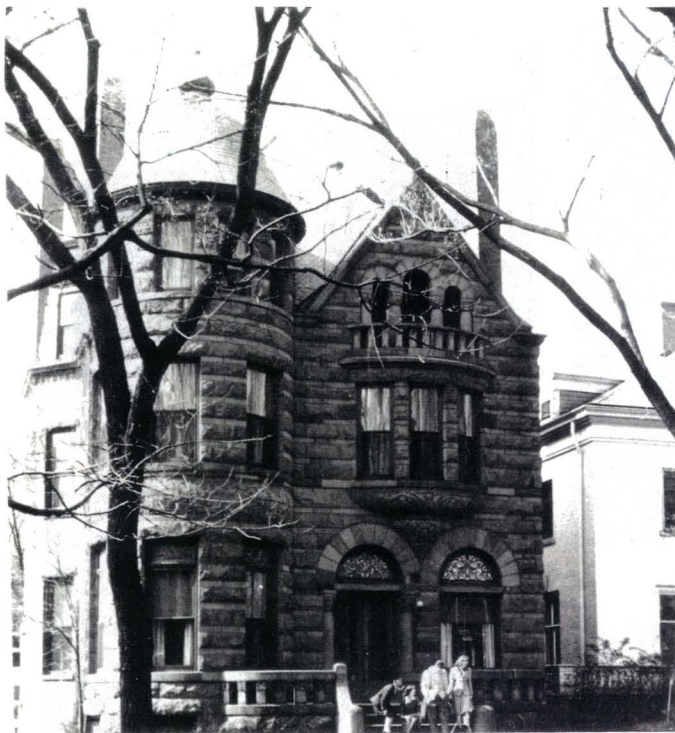


Figure 21. Gordon-Moore House, 819 West Franklin Street,  
ca. 1892; demolished 1950s.  
(James Branch Cabell Special Collections)



Figure 22. 1000 West Franklin Street. (Photo: Author)



Figure 23. 924-930 West Franklin Street. (Photo: Author)



Figure 24. 932 West Franklin Street. (Photo: Author)



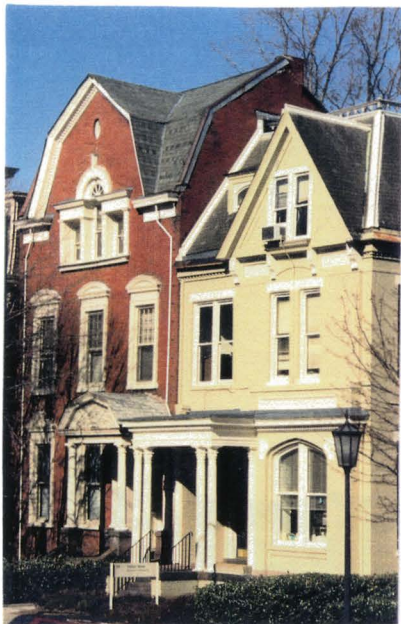


Figure 25.

Robinson House (818) and Dunlop-Harrison House (816), West Franklin Street. (Photo: Author)



Figure 26. Beth Ahabah Synagogue, 1111 West Franklin Street. Noland and Baskervill, architects, 1904. (Photo: Author)



Figure 27. Scott-Bocock House, 909 West Franklin Street. Noland and Baskervill, architects, 1908-1911. *(Photo: Author)*







Figure 29. The Raleigh Building, 1001 West Franklin Street. Aubrey Chesterman, architect, 1907. (Photo: Author)



Figure 30. Gresham Court Apartments, 1030 West Franklin Street. Carneal and Johnston, architects, 1909. (*The Valentine Museum*)





Figure 31. The Prestwold, West Franklin at Pine Street. Alfred C. Bossom, architect, 1927. (Photo: Author)

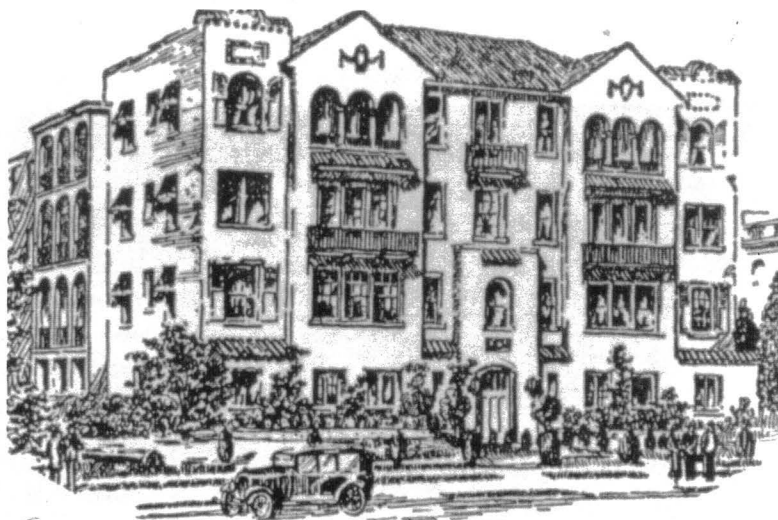


Figure 32. Franklin Terrace Apartments, 812-814 West Franklin Street, ca. 1925. Illustrated for advertisement in Four Arts, 1934.



Figure 33. Cast iron fence in front of Gunn-Bird House,  
820 West Franklin Street (Photo: Chris Dunham)



Figure 34. Wrought iron screen, Jones-Williams House,  
800 West Franklin Street (Photo: Chris Dunham)

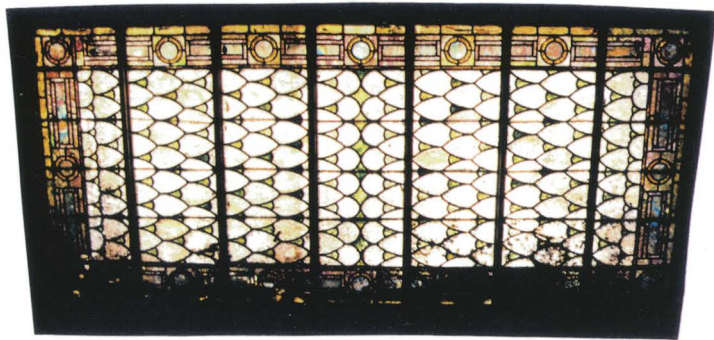


Figure 35. Stained-glass skylight in Hunton House, 810 West Franklin Street. *(Photo: Author)*

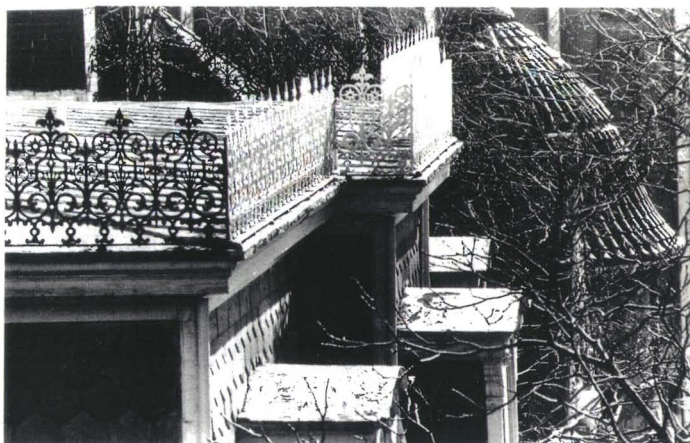


Figure 36. Roof Cresting, White House, 806 West Franklin Street.  
*(James Branch Cabell Special Collections)*



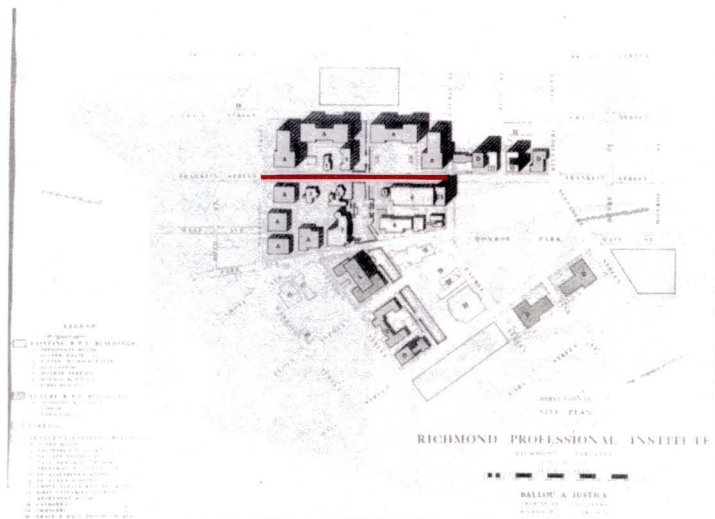


Figure 37. Site Plan, Ballou and Justice, 1966. 800 and 900 blocks — Showing clearance of nearly all of the historic structures. (James Branch Cabell Special Collections)

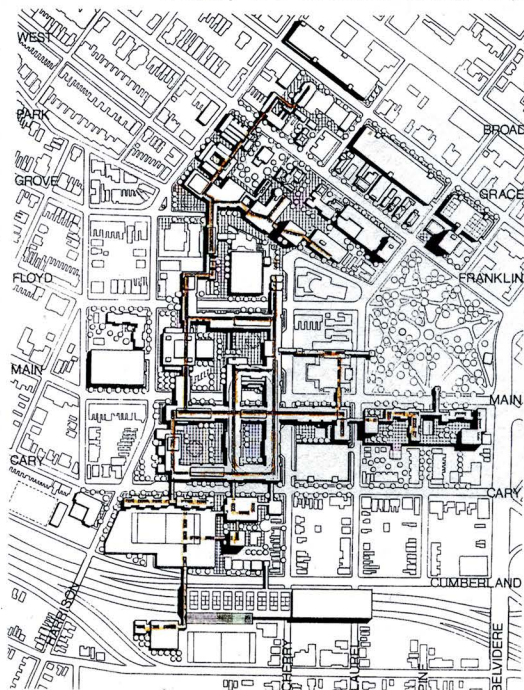


Figure 38. Circulation Schematic, VCU Master Plan, 1970. (James Branch Cabell Special Collections)



Figure 39. Modillion block from cornice of Bowe House,  
917 West Franklin Street, 1887-1888.  
(Photo: Chris Dunham)



Figure 40. Copper roof cresting from cornice of Younger  
House, 919 West Franklin Street, 1891  
Cresting and cornice added in 1904.  
(Photo: Chris Dunham)



Figure 41. Streetscape, 800-810 West Franklin Street. (Photo: Author)

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**APPENDIX A:**  
**Architectural Catalogue**  
**VCU-Owned Buildings**  
**800 and 900 Blocks, West Franklin Street**

N.B. Buildings are listed numerically in order of street address, starting at 800 and ending at 923. The buildings have been named according to their original owners' last names and current names. Abbreviations are as follows: NYC = New York City; RVA = Richmond, Virginia; WDC = Washington, D.C. (All photos by author except Monroe Terrace postcard, used courtesy James Branch Cabell Special Collections).

Jones-Williams House  
800 West Franklin Street



**Original Owner:** William Henry Jones **Date:** 1890-1891 **Architect:** M.J. Dimmock, RVA

**The Jones-Williams House** was built as a two-and-one half story, coursed, rock-faced grey granite Richardsonian Romanesque single family dwelling, with a front gable and corner tower capped with a bell-shape roof. The house is capped with a pyramidal hipped roof with cross gables and pantile roof topped with a spherical finial. The granite used for this house most likely came from a local source, described in an 1890 newspaper article as "unrivaled James River Granite" (*Richmond Dispatch*, 1 January 1890: 1). The front porch and pierced stone parapet is supported by paired columns with foliate cushion capitals.

**Most notable** about this building is its interior, or what survives of it. The living hall is embellished with oak wainscoting and quarter-sawn oak parquet floors. Spanning the entry vestibule is a large oak lintel into which is carved an egg-and-dart frieze. The egg-and-dart also appears on the fireplace frame, echoed in both metal and wood. The oak chimney piece is supported by Ionic capitals and colonnettes. The newel of the main stair echoes in oak the foliate pattern of the carved granite cushion capitals of the porch.

In what is now the rear hall, the ceilings are ornamented with plaster-work tracery, floral pendants and pargework plants and animals. The stained and leaded glass windows of the stair landing and some of the beveled leaded glass transoms are intact.

The house was designed by prominent local architect, Capt. M.J. Dimmock. It was built by local contractor and builder T. Wiley Davis for William Henry Jones, a tobacco merchant

of Richmond. Jones sold it in 1899 to A. D. Williams, son of tobacco magnate T.C. Williams, Sr. A.D. Williams was a partner in Grubbs & Williams, real estate agents and auctioneers, until forming a new partnership with N.W. Bowe in 1884, creating Williams & Bowe, Real Estate and Loans. It was acquired by the Richmond Professional Institute in June 1952, at which time alterations were undertaken to divide up the space. The liberal use of white paint on the second and third floors and many of the choices of materials and quality of workmanship of the alterations are questionable. Not handicapped accessible.



Parquet floors in the living hall, 800 West Franklin Street (Photo: Author)





Monroe Terrace  
Apartments/  
Johnson Hall  
**801 West Franklin Street**

**Original Name:**  
Monroe Terrace Apartments

**Date:** 1912-1915

**Architect:**  
Alfred C. Bossom, NYC

**The Monroe Terrace Apartments** was designed in 1912 by the New York architect Alfred C. Bossom, later Lord Bossom, whose other commissions in Richmond include the Prestwold Apartments (West Franklin Street at Pine, 1927), and the former Virginia Trust Building (821 East Main Street, 1919). At twelve stories overlooking Monroe Park, the apartment building was the largest to date in the residential quarter. Bossom chose Gothic details to accent his masonry-over-steel-frame construction. On Laurel Street, one enters through a ribbed, pointed arch beneath an

iron canopy with gothic detailing. The polygonal projecting window bays that articulate the street sides of the building are accented with decorative polychrome brick work and balconies are pierced by quatrefoils and trefoils. The roof profile on the Franklin Street elevation consists of a curvilinear parapet rising from a central projecting bay accented by light orange bricks. The interior of the building has been thoroughly altered to accommodate a student dormitory (Johnson Hall) and offices. Ceilings have been dropped and fluorescent fixtures installed. Doric pilasters in the main hall are the only evidence of the original interior.

**When Monroe Terrace was built**, the wood frame house that stood on the site was moved to the Northside. The original house was an interpretation of the Second Empire style, and dated to somewhere around 1870. It was the house of Col. Albert Ordway, active in local politics, and the man responsible for lobbying the city to create Monroe Square out of the former fair grounds. Ordway lost his house on West Franklin to foreclosure. The house was then occupied by Charles R. Skinker, of Hill, Skinker & Watkins, special commission merchants, fertilizer agents, and proprietors of Centre Warehouse, 1412-1416 East Cary Street. The house was destroyed by fire in January 1997.

Blanchard-White House  
806 West Franklin Street



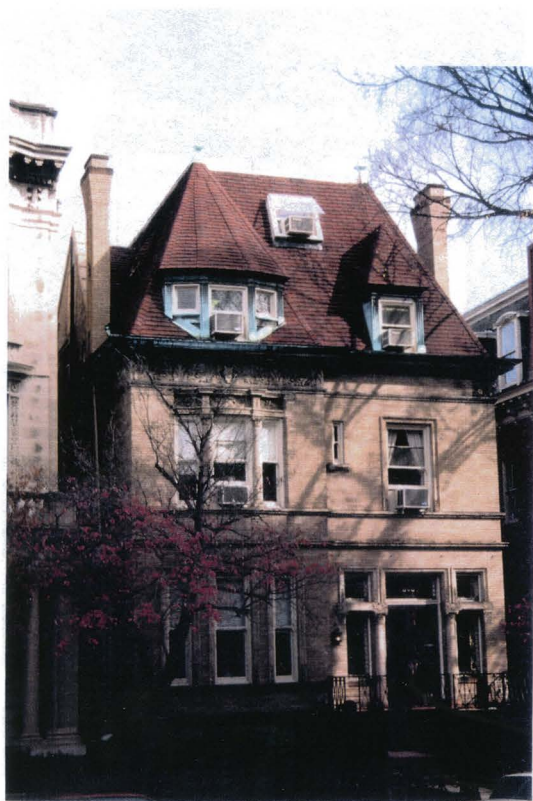
**Original Owner:** Sylvanus Blanchard **Date:** 1881-1883 **Architect:** unknown

**Blanchard-White House** is one of the earlier extant houses on West Franklin Street. Built for Sylvanus Blanchard, a wholesale grocer, the house is in the Second Empire style, two-and-one-half stories, pressed-brick with brownstone accents and a slate-covered French roof. Original to the house was cast-iron roof cresting (Figure 36) that recently disappeared. The house is on a center-hall plan, five bays wide, with a projecting central bay. The segmental-arch windows are accented with flush brownstone window crowns. The steps and door surround are also of brownstone. The full width porch is supported by square posts with Corinthian capitals. The cornice consists of modillions, a dentil frieze and brackets. Original to the house was a small one-story entrance portico and a cast iron railing around the porch.

**The interior of White House** is on a colossal scale. The windows of the first floor stretch floor to ceiling. Paneled wainscoting runs along the walls of the enormous entry hall. Matching parlors would have been entered through Tuscan columns with full entablature and brackets. In the extant west parlor, the chimney breast is evident, but the fireplace has been bricked over and the chimney piece is missing. A complex plasterwork molding runs the perimeter of the room, but parts of it are missing. The grand stair case was designed with room-sized landings and severe gooseneck bannisters. The original interior color scheme has been lost under many coats of white and pink paint. On the exterior, the dormers are rotting and require flashing and some careful reconstruction. Handicapped accessible.



Buek-Thurston House  
808 West Franklin Street



**Original Owner:**

Charles E. & Sue Williams Buek

**Date:** 1893-1894

**Architect:**

Peter J. Lauritsen, NYC

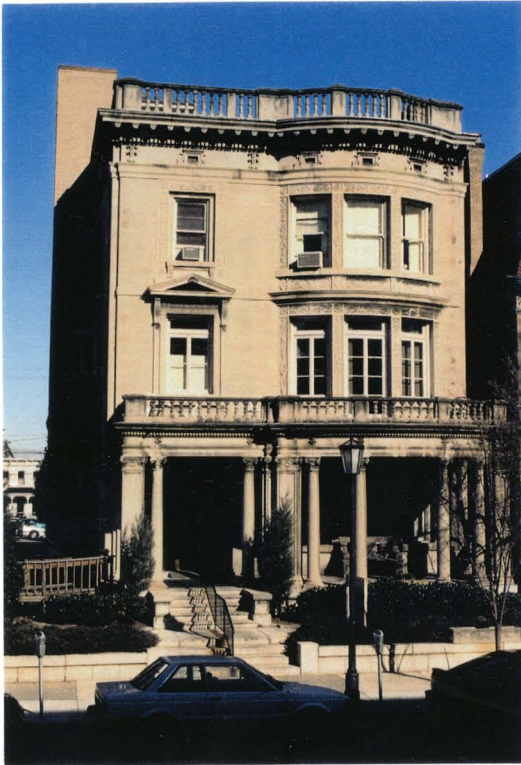
**The Buek-Thurston House** was commissioned by Sue Williams Buek and Charles E. Buek, daughter and son-in-law of tobacco magnate T.C. Williams, Sr. According to Buek's daughter, the house was built on family property, at the edge of the garden of the T.C. Williams, Sr. house (formerly 816 West Franklin Street, ca. 1869, demolished ca. 1924), "just beyond the grape arbor." The Bueks lived in the Williams house from 1884 until their own house was completed in 1894. Buek was listed in directories as secretary of Curtis & Buek, foreign ship brokers, and

manager of Richmond Elevator Company. The exterior is of a light beige brick with terra cotta zoomorphic and foliate ornaments. It is two-and-one half stories high and topped with a steeply pitched hipped roof and copper finials. The roof is was originally clad in orange spanish tile, though it is now covered with orange asphalt shingles.

**The proportions** of the entry vestibule and enormous oak door contrast with the relatively small entrance hall and large chimney piece, carved with heraldic imagery (shield with goat and trees) that is echoed in the mosaic tile of the hearth. Evidence of the original inclination of the house to the garden to the west is apparent in the rear parlor (possibly a salon or dining room); on the west wall, the windows stretch floor to ceiling, whereas on the east side that would have faced the existing 806 West Franklin Street, marquetry laurel and ribbons grace panels that shorten the length of the windows.

The natural richness of the quarter-sawn oak and other woods is largely intact on the first floor. At the second floor landing, dark brown paint/stain has been applied in the bannister and continues through the top floors. Original wood work has been painted over with white paint and doors of differing heights and styles have been added when the space was partitioned for offices. Not handicapped accessible.

## Hunton House 810 West Franklin Street



**Original Owner:**  
Eppa Hunton, Jr.

**Date:** 1914-1916

**Architect:**  
Noland and Baskervill, RVA

**The local architects Noland and Baskervill** established a presence on West Franklin Street from the turn of the century to their 1914 plans for the Eppa Hunton, Jr. House. Built at a time when apartment buildings were eclipsing single-family mansions, 810 West Franklin Street was the last single residence built on the 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street. Hunton House is in the American Renaissance style, three and one half stories in height, faced in smoothlimestone with carved ornament. The full-width porch is supported by columns and square posts with Corinthian capitals. The

porch entablature has a dentil cornice and is topped with a balustrade. The tripartite bow windows are framed by rinceaux. The second floor window is surmounted by a pediment supported by consoles. The half-story frieze is pierced with rectangular windows and runs below the dentil band and modillion cornice. A balustrade runs the perimeter of the roof, fencing what was originally a roof garden.

**The interior detailing** in this side-hall plan dwelling relies primarily on the Corinthian order and variations. The current doctoral seminar room contains the most vivid examples of ornate plaster and woodwork. The carved mahogany balusters of the stairs are embellished hierarchically, from the most elaborate carvings and detailing on the first floor, gradually simplifying over the second and third floors, to the basic square balusters of the top story.

Hunton House is marred in general by thick brown stain/paint on interior (mostly mahogany) wood work. Additionally, the stair hall is supposed to be illuminated by a large art-glass skylight (Figure 35). Lack of proper maintenance of the skylight, however, has led to sooty build-up on the exterior and leakage that is causing the plaster to spall off the walls of the upper half story. Hunton House is handicapped accessible.

Franklin Terrace (Apartments)  
812-14 West Franklin Street



**Original Owner:** Franklin Terrace Apartments    **Date:** ca. 1925    **Architect:** unknown

**Franklin Terrace Apartments** was the first and only example of the Spanish Eclectic style of architecture to pop up along West Franklin Street. Franklin Terrace was also the last residential building to be constructed on the 800 Block of West Franklin Street. Despite its uniqueness, it would not have seemed out of place on a street renowned for the diversity and daring of its architecture. Built on the site of the T.C. Williams Sr. house, a mid-nineteenth century Italianate house demolished ca. 1924, the Franklin Terrace Apartments is stuccoed brick and four stories in height. Its seven bay symmetrical facade has two projecting bays with balconies on the third floor shaded by pent pantiled roofs. The fourth floor balconies each include a three part arcade under the gable of each bay. At the corners of the roof are what appear to be false parapets of stucco over brick accented with exposed brick headers, possibly mimicking bell-towers. The main roof has been significantly altered; The original tiles have been replaced with orange composition shingles. At some point within the last 25 years, an elevator shaft was appended to the center of the facade. As this is an example of the Spanish style, a beige-brown stucco color most likely would have been original. It is now painted institutional grey. Franklin Terrace is handicapped accessible.

**The interior** has been completely altered. Some wood floors remain. A 1934 advertisement for the apartment building describes the availability of "Two Rooms, Kitchenette and Bath, to Five Rooms and Bath" and mentions the first floor's "Beautiful Parlors and Lounge," and the tea room and complete dining facilities (Figure 32; Four Arts Magazine, September 1934).





**Dunlop-Harrison House**  
**816 West Franklin Street**

**Original Owner:** John Dunlop

**Date:** 1887

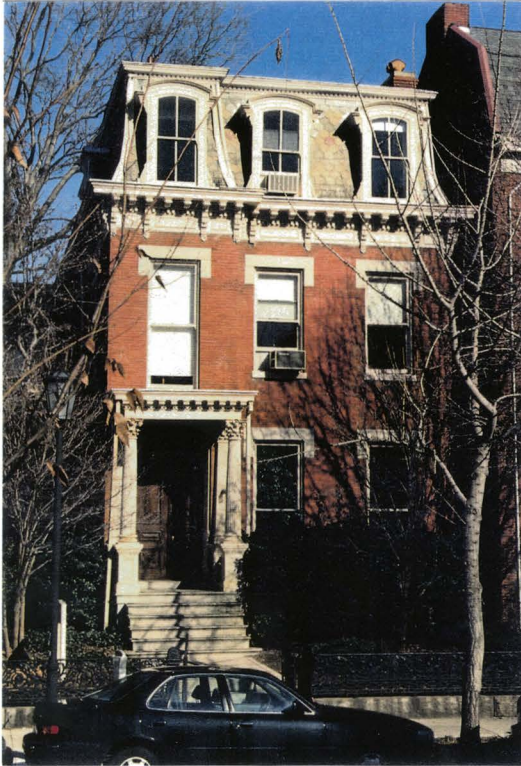
**Architect:** unknown

**Harrison House** was built for John Dunlop, a lawyer and reputed poker associate of Lewis Ginter, and his wife, Mildred Maury Dunlop, later to become president of the Women's Club in 1901. This two-and-one-half story brick Queen Anne house is ornamented with inset decorative panels and a patterned masonry chimney. The projecting front gable is timbered and its shallow overhang is accentuated with brackets. Set into the steeply pitched, truncated hipped roof is a small shed dormer with curved casement windows. The main roof itself is crested with copper or iron. The chimney is articulated on the east exterior wall of the house

and runs through a shallow gable tying it into the main roof. The porch (portico) is supported by paired columns with foliate capitals and the entablature's dentil cornice is carried across the projecting bay. The exterior is in relatively good shape, although the green and white color scheme is not the original.

The interior of this side-hall-plan dwelling retains some architectural details and woodwork, though white paint has been applied throughout. Not handicapped accessible.

Gunn-Bird House  
820 West Franklin Street



**Original Owner:**  
Thomas H. Gunn

**Date:** 1886

**Architect:** built by Trexler & Elmore, Contractors, RVA

**Another manifestation of the Second Empire** on West Franklin Street is the Gunn-Bird House. Considerably smaller than its peer at 806 West Franklin Street, Gunn-Bird House is brick, two-and-one-half stories high, three bays across, with a decoratively patterned and flared slate mansard roof. The west bay and its roof project slightly from the facade, articulating the hall-side of the house. The portico is a modest Corinthian order the columns set on pedestals. Over the 1/1 hung windows are rectangular, with flush stone window crowns. The

2/2 dormer windows set into the mansard roof have slightly more elaborate window hoods with brackets. The cornice incorporates dentils, modillions, and brackets. A dentil band runs along the crest of the roof.

**The interior** retains a fair amount of woodwork. The etched glass transom over the front door has an intriguing tropical theme. Not handicapped accessible

The house was built by local contractors Trexler & Elmore for Thomas H. Gunn, partner in Christian & Gunn, tobacco stemmers and commission merchants. Gunn died in 1888 and his heirs sold the property in the early 1890s to T. William Pemberton.

Ritter-Hickok House  
821 West Franklin Street



**Original Owner:** William C. Ritter    **Date:** 1855; 1903-1910    **Architect:** unknown

**The earliest extant house** on West Franklin Street is the Ritter-Hickok House, though its thorough Georgian Revival renovation of 1903-1910 belies its earliest incarnation as a suburban Italianate villa (Figure 3). Built in 1855, before this stretch of Franklin Street was incorporated into the city proper, the Italian villa was appropriate in its rural setting. By the turn of the century, it was well within the city limits, (courtesy of 1867 and 1892 annexations) and its new owner, Mrs. Belle Hickok of Baltimore saw fit to bring its style up to date with its fashionable neighbors. The three-bay-wide, two-story brick house has a hipped roof and central front gable. Four pedimented dormers with arch windows face east and west (two on each side). An addition was made to the rear of the house, enlarging the symmetrical central mass. A one-story portico is supported by Scamozzi Ionic columns and capped with a balustrade. The front door is surmounted by a semi elliptical fanlight and flanked with side lights. The windows are 2/2 spanned by brick jack arches with keystones on the first floor; The first floor windows are significantly larger than those of the second.

**The interior**, like the exterior, has been thoroughly altered from its Italianate roots. There is a wealth of new fixtures that speak more to the turn of the century Georgian Revival than to the suburban Italianate taste.

After Ritter, the house was occupied by Samuel L. Harwood, then R.B. Chaffin. Hickok bought the house in 1903. This building was purchased by the Richmond Professional Institute for \$17,500.00 in December of 1939. It was the sixth property acquired by the developing Institute and was initially used as a women's dormitory.



Strause-Blanton House  
826-28 West Franklin Street



**Original Owner:** Leon L. Strause

**Date:** 1892

**Architect:**

Charles H. Read, Jr., RVA

**Architect Charles H. Read, Jr.** spent some time working in Washington, D.C. before returning to his home town of Richmond and designing, among other things, Union Theological Seminary on the city's North Side, (1896) and Planter's National Bank downtown (Main Street, 1893). Among Read's residential commissions was a house on West Franklin Street for Leon L. Strause, partner in Strause & Bernard, tobacco merchants. Read illustrated his design

for 826-28 West Franklin in a self published collection of recent work, Charles H. Read, Jr. Modern Buildings Designed by Charles H. Read, 1882-1900, (Richmond, Virginia: Jones & Son, 1900)(Figure 20). The two-and-one-half story house is of striking gold brick with contrasting red sandstone belt courses and decorative details set on a foundation of coursed, rock-faced brownstone. The main pyramidal hipped roof is topped with a finial, as is the tower sitting at the west corner of the building, with a steeply pitched conical roof and gabled wall dormers. At the cornice of the tower roof are gargoyle gutter spouts. A triple arcade on the second floor of the facade is comprised of round brick arches and brick pilasters with stone cushion capitals. The west elevation includes a gable wall dormer with double round arched windows, and three patterned masonry chimneys. At the rear of the house is a two story polygonal bay. The stonework was executed by local contractors Mason & Sim.

**The front door** of Blanton House is notable for its beveled leaded glazing. Interior was divided into apartments in the mid-twentieth century. Some original woodwork remains. Not handicapped accessible.

Saunders House/Founder's Hall  
827 West Franklin Street



**Original Owner:**

Mary and E.A. Saunders

**Date:** 1883-1885

**Architect:** unknown

**827 West Franklin Street** was built for successful provisions broker Edmond A. Saunders and his wife Mary. Like many of the businessmen in Richmond, the house was owned in Mary Saunders' name. It is the an imaginative adaptation of the Second Empire style, incorporating design motifs of Greek and Gothic origin. The two-and-one-half story brick house with yellow sandstone trim is on a center hall plan, with the three main bays of the facade articulated in different ways. The east end has a three sided projecting bay with bipartite

windows in the front and single windows on the sides. Across the first floor bay a stone band runs below a denticulated belt course, corresponding to the placement of window crowns. On the second floor bay, carved, peaked window crowns are employed. An engaged mansard tower roof at the half story level is faced with a pedimented wall dormer. The central bay is flat, with a cast-iron porch supported by a composite order. The wall dormer set directly into the roof has curved sides, a stylized Greek-inspired pediment with central rosette and zig-zag frieze. Two parallel belt courses run across the facade, between which are bold brackets across the east and central bays. The west bay is a square projection with similar details as the east bay, but the wall dormer is set against the slate mansard roof, with a flared, shallow pitched pediment pierced by a lancet window and topped with a foliate pinnacle.

**E.A. Saunders' initials** are etched into frosted glass over the entry. Many of the original gas/electric fixtures are still intact, supplemented with large fluorescent units. The west parlors contain incised woodwork and relief panels on the fireplace. The detailing once exhibited in this house is evidenced in the ornate brass sliding door locks on the parlor doors. Interior woodwork was executed by local stair-builder and woodworker B.B. Van Buren. An Egyptian Revival mirror was formerly located in the rear parlor, but has since disappeared from the house.

Ginter House  
901 West Franklin Street



**Original Owner:** Lewis Ginter    **Date:** 1888-1891/92    **Architect:** Harvey L. Page, WDC

**Begun in 1888**, Lewis Ginter's choice of location for Ginter House was the inducement for many well-to-do Richmonders to move to West Franklin Street. It would take nearly four years to complete the massive mansion. The main block of Ginter house is three-and-one-half stories in height, and was built on a center-hall plan. The wide living hall is flanked by parlors. The east parlor is articulated on the exterior as a square projecting bay. The west parlor is partially comprised in the polygonal three-story tower. The stone and brick work is executed in a hierarchy of materials. The basement is clad in rock-faced brownstone. The first floor is finished in pecked brownstone. Upper floors are pressed brick executed in both stretcher courses and basket weave patterns. Molded brick and drilled stone panels are inset into the exterior. The east elevation contains a Syrian arch over a recessed entrance and a two-story bowed bay. The roof is clad in Spanish tiles. A service wing meanders off the south west corner of the main block of the building.

**The detailing** of Ginter House is exquisite in materials and workmanship. The stairs were executed by local stair builder B.B. Van Buren, who performed interior woodwork for the Saunders (827) and Elletts (807). The exterior includes a massive oak lintel supporting the front porch, cut and carved stone columns. A unique feature of both the interior and exterior is the dichroic art glass. The glass, used in the transoms of the first floor windows, reflects different colors depending upon whether it is viewed from the interior or exterior.

The bachelor Ginter was a man of wealth and taste. An entrepreneur from the north, Ginter made a fortune in the tobacco industry after the Civil War. He was well-regarded in the community (despite his Yankee roots), and spent a great deal of his wealth fostering the growth of Richmond into a first-class city. He was responsible for developing one of Richmond's "better" suburbs, Ginter Park, and for commissioning the elegant Jefferson Hotel (1893-1895) from New York architects Carrere and Hastings. Ginter did not enjoy his new house on West Franklin Street for long, dying 2 October 1897. He left his house to niece Grace Arents. The house was later used as the Richmond Public Library in the 1920s. When the library announced its impending relocation in 1929, the William & Mary Extension negotiated to acquire the property in 1931.

Although the building is one of the better-preserved structures on the 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street, it is not without problems. The repointing of the bricks on the facade is crude and obvious. The window frames have been painted white when they should be clear-stained or oiled oak. Certain interior spaces have been divided to the detriment of mantles and other decorative features that have been removed.

Ginter House is one of the main administrative buildings on campus. It is also the corner stone of the 900 block of West Franklin Street. Great care must be taken in sensitively preserving this building. It is one of the most important buildings not only on this street, but in the city. It is also important for its role in VCU's history. The stable of Ginter House was altered with WPA money to create the Anderson Gallery, reputed to be the country's oldest art gallery featuring modern art. Ginter House is handicapped accessible.



Allison House/The President's House  
908-10 West Franklin Street



**Original Owner:** James W. Allison    **Date:** 1894-1896    **Architect:** Griffin & Randall, NYC

**Allison house was the first** fully developed manifestation of the Colonial Revival on West Franklin. It was designed by New York City architects Griffin & Randall who started designing the house in 1893. The house may have been a response to the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, where the adoption of classical forms was promoted with the notion of the "White City."

Allison's house was built nearly opposite Ginter's house at 901 West Franklin Street. In its lightness and Classicism, Allison house is also the converse of Ginter house. Allison house is comparable in size to the largest dwellings on the street, including 901 and 806 West Franklin. Built on a center-hall plan, the five-bay-wide house is two-and-one-half stories in height, of pressed brick with a hipped slate roof. The projecting central bay contains a pediment/cross-gable with a cornice return supported by brick pilasters with Ionic capitals. The central window is surmounted by a broken segmental arched pediment. The semi-circular portico is supported by Composite columns. The front door is surmounted by a fanlight. A peculiar feature of this house is the treatment of the first-floor windows. The rectangular hung windows are flanked by smaller side-lights. Scrolled broken pediments are set into semi-elliptical "niches" that crown the windows.

Allison made his fortune in the fertilizer and sulfuric acid manufacturing business, Allison & Addison. Like neighbor Lewis Ginter, Allison was unable to enjoy his house for long. The house was completed in 1896 and Allison died in 1898. Allison left a young widow, Minnie Allison, and a young son, James. James Allison played an important role in the development

of West Franklin Street Campus for Richmond Professional Institute. Allison offered his father's home to the school in 1938. The terms of the deal stipulated that the university would put \$1,500.00 down and pay the same amount per year for 29 years, allowing RPI to acquire another important building for the growing campus.

908-910 West Franklin Street now houses the offices of the University President. The central hall suffered the loss of its exceptional Zuber scenic wallpaper during a firebombing in 1971. Other aspects of the interiors fared better. The president's office is paneled in walnut. Delft tiles, original lighting fixtures and other decorative features remain largely intact.

Stagg House  
912 West Franklin Street



**Original Owner:**  
Thomas E. Stagg

**Date:** 1891

**Architect:** Albert L. West, RVA

One of Richmond architect **Albert L. West's** last commissions before his death in 1892 was a pair of town houses at 912 and 914 West Franklin Street for two prominent businessmen, Thomas E. Stagg, manufacturer of sashes, blinds and interior finishes, and George B. McAdams, of McAdams & Berry, clothiers. The Gothic and Richardsonian Romanesque intersect at Stagg House, which is faced in coursed, rock-faced grey granite with dressed granite lintels and cornice. The two-and-one-half story house has a central projecting bay and a steeply pitched gable with

pinnacle. Four round-arch windows and an inset quatrefoil window grace the gable, along with a carved foliate relief at its apex. The gable projects from a steep slate roof and is flanked by two small steep-pedimented dormers. At the cornice are two stone corbels treated as masks. A gently curving staircase leads to an unenclosed porch, (all of granite) decked with polychrome encaustic tiles. A round arch over the front door is launched from short columns with foliate cushion capitals. The 1/1 hung windows are paired, between each pair runs a thin pilaster and over each window is a transom. Stone and brick work was carried out by local contractor W.O. Burton. The first floor transoms are jewel toned art-glass. Thomas E. Stagg started out in Richmond as a carpenter, eventually owning his own business, including a planing mill and box factory.

Myers-Anderson House  
913 West Franklin Street



**Original Owner:**

Grace and E.T.D. Myers, Jr.

**Date:** 1907-1908

**Architect:** Noland and Baskervill, RVA; Remodeled by Noland and Baskervill

**Noland and Baskervill** designed this Colonial Revival townhouse in 1907, then were hired to redesign the interior seven years later. This three-and-one-half-story, three-bay-wide, house was built on a side-hall plan. The Myers-Anderson townhouse was built long and narrow for the lot. The red pressed-brick facade is accented with limestone quoins and a copper bay window with consoles at the second floor level. The roof is of copper green pantiles with a modillion cornice. A segmental-arched dormer is set into the hipped roof. Paired

Doric columns support a temple portico. The west elevation includes copper-clad oriel windows at the first and second stories. The house was built for E.T.D. Myers, Jr., Civil Engineer, and wife Grace. The Myerses sold the house in 1914 to Henry W. Anderson, partner in Munford, Hunton, Williams, and Anderson. Anderson called upon the original architects of the house to perform interior alterations in 1914.

**The interior** retains a good deal of original woodwork. Handicapped accessible.



McAdams House  
914 West Franklin Street



**Original Owner:**

Sallie and George B. McAdams

**Date:** 1891

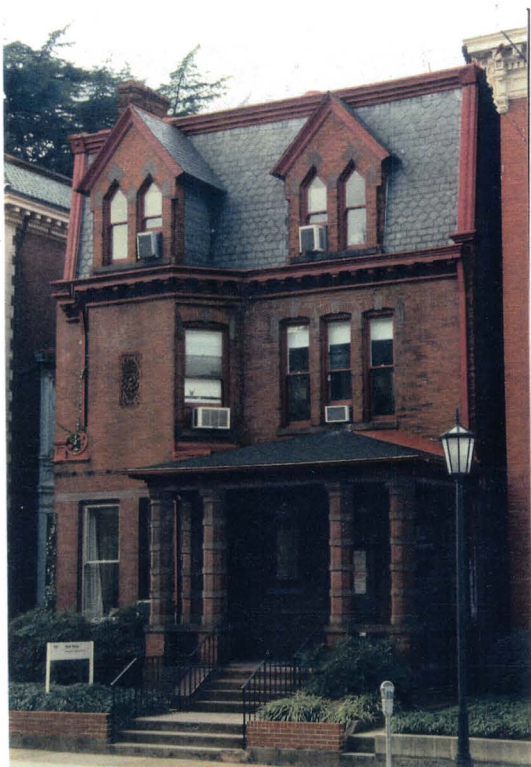
**Architect:** Albert L. West, RVA

**One of Richmond architect**

**Albert L. West's** last commissions before his death in 1892 was a pair of town houses at 912 and 914 West Franklin Street for the families of two prominent businessmen, George B. McAdams of McAdams & Berry clothiers and Thomas E. Stagg, manufacturer of sashes, blinds and interior finishes. McAdams house is faced in coursed rock-faced grey granite with dressed granite lintels and cornice, and the top story and gable are of pressed brick that would have originally been left unpainted to create contrast and polychromy. The three-and-one-half story house

appears to be in a Gothic-inspired Richardsonian Romanesque style. It has a two story projecting bay capped with a brick and granite parapet counter-balanced by a steeply pitched gable with three round topped granite-arch windows. The gable projects from a steep slate roof that also includes a small flat pyramidal. The porch is decked with polychrome encaustic tiles and the entrance vestibule is of oak. The 1/1 hung windows are paired, and over each window is a transom with wrought iron grills. Stone and brick work was carried out by local contractor W.O. Burton.

Starke House  
915 West Franklin Street



**Original Owner:**

Ashton and Florine Dunlap Starke

**Date:** 1885; 1902

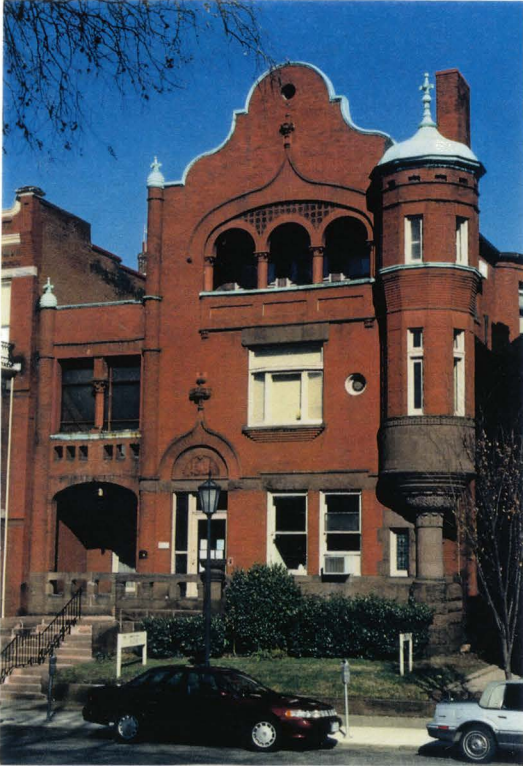
**Architect:** unknown; Remodeled by Noland and Baskervill, RVA

**Starke House, 915 West Franklin Street**, was built in 1885. It is closely related stylistically to its contemporary, Laburnum (1884-1885). The similarities may indicate that the local builders the Gibsons, known to have designed and built Laburnum for Joseph Bryan, were similarly employed by Starke. The red pressed-brick house is two-and-one-half stories in height on a side-hall plan. A remodelling in 1902 by Noland and Baskervill added octagonal porch columns constructed of brownstone dies inserted between brick work. Noland and Baskervill also added another

wall-dormer with pair lancet windows to match the single existing dormer set against the French roof. The roof has a modillion cornice. A flower relief plaque of molded brick is set into the front of projecting the polygonal bay. Small brackets flank the bay. Starke House is a very peculiar design, the least cogent of the street.

Ashton Starke, a dealer in agricultural implements, was instrumental in the success of the 1888 Virginia Exposition at Fair Grounds. Starke was involved in Commonwealth Club (2 years as president) along with many of neighbors.

Millhiser House  
**916 West Franklin Street**

**Original Owner:**

Samson Hirsh/Gustavus Millhiser

**Date:** 1891-1894**Architect:**

William M. Poindexter, WDC.

**By far the most exotic** extant house on the 800 and 900 blocks of West Franklin Street is the Moorish-inspired Millhiser House. The brownstone foundation supports upper floors of red pressed-brick. A polygonal tower at the east corner of the facade is launched from a carved foliate brownstone corbel and capped with a copper roof and finial. Molded brick or terra cotta rosette ornaments, are set into the facade. A curvilinear parapet, is the central element of the roofline. Corner turrets are capped with copper pinnacles. The facade is rich with a brownstone belt course, molded brick detailing, and copper

accents. At the third floor level is a gallery featuring a tripartite round arch arcade launched from squat columns with Corinthian capitals.

The interior of Millhiser House contains some of the most important decorative detailing of any of the houses of West Franklin Street. Woodwork, tile, art glass, cast iron firebacks depicting various scenes of Shakespeare and classical mythology adorn the rooms.

The house was commissioned by Samson Hirsh of 824 West Franklin Street (Figure 9) from Washington, D.C. architect William M. Poindexter. It was transferred in 1894 for \$5.00 to Gustavus Millhiser, brother of Hirsh's wife Amelia and partner in Moses Millhiser & Co.



Bowe House  
917 West Franklin Street



**Original Owner:**  
Nathaniel Woodson Bowe

**Date:** 1887-1888

**Architect:** unknown

**Bowe house is an** Italianate style, three-bay-wide dwelling, built on a side-hall plan. Three full stories in height, the house has a Corinthian portico of cast-iron, and a modillion & bracketed cornice. The modillions are of laminated-wood construction (Figure 39). The facade is red pressed-brick with contrasting stone window crowns. The house was built for N.W. Bowe, who started his career as a bookkeeper for Grubbs & Williams, Real Estate Agents & Auctioneers. He then became partner in Williams & Bowe, Real Estate & loans, with A.D. Williams (of 816 West

Franklin Street) in 1884. Bowe later established N.W. Bowe & Sons, real estate. This classic design offsets the more flamboyant facades on the street.

Stokes House  
918 West Franklin Street



**Original Owner:**  
William G. Stokes

**Date:** 1888-1889

**Architect:**  
Carl Ruehrmund, RVA

**918 West Franklin Street** was designed by German architect Carl Ruehrmund for William G. Stokes (in trust for S.L. Stokes, probably his wife). Ruehrmund received his training at the Royal Academy of Architecture in Berlin, and emigrated the States in 1881. His designs exhibited bold curvilinearity and fanciful facade treatments. The style of the Stokes house was unprecedented on the street. It is embellished with terracotta ornament, and its curving parapet is a departure from the commonly preferred French roofs or bracketed cornices of its neighbors. The three-story Stokes House was

built on a side-hall plan. The facade includes a two-story projecting bay crowned with a bulging wrought-iron balustrade. The red brick facade is accented with rock-faced granite lintels that follow the tightly-radiused curve of the windows in the bay. Rectangular inset panels on the facade contain groups of terra cotta medallions. At the cornice, above a granite belt course, is a double frieze of ornament, both geometric and floral, with putto portrait medallions at each end.

Stokes made his money in the wholesale grocery and commission merchant business. W.G. Stokes began his career working for his father's company, A.Y. Stokes & Company. After the death of the senior Stokes in 1886, Thomas Potts, W.G. Stokes, and brother Allen Y. Stokes, Jr., formed Potts, Stokes & Co., wholesale grocers and commission merchants. After the dissolution of Potts, Stokes, & Co., W.G. Stokes went into business manufacturing harnesses in the firm Wright & Stokes, steam tannery and collar factory.

## Younger-Crenshaw House 919 West Franklin Street



**Original Owner:**  
Lawson Chiles Younger

**Date:** 1891; 1904

**Architect:** unknown;  
Remodeled by Noland and  
Baskervill, RVA

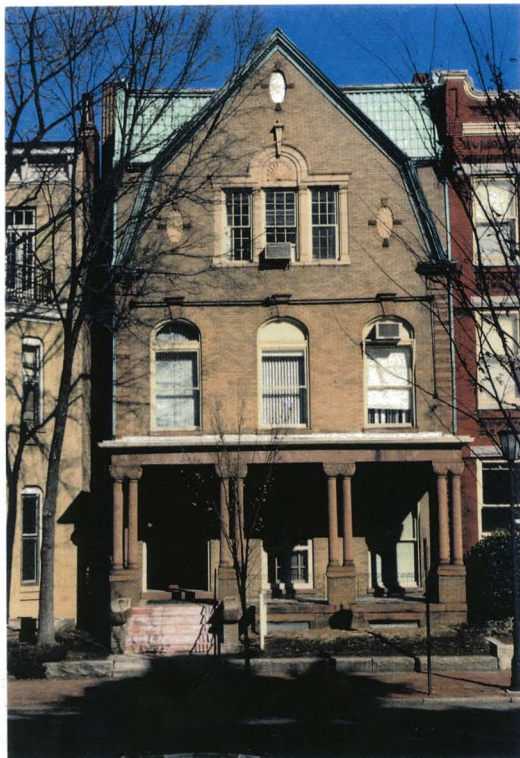
**Prior to purchasing** the property on West Franklin Street, Younger had boarded at the St James Hotel (15 North 12th Street) and in a private residence at 500 East Grace. Lawson Chiles Younger started his wholesale grocery career in the partnership Heitman & Younger, 13 South 14th Street. By the 1890s, a new firm, L.C. Younger & Co., was a subsidiary of the many Millhiser business enterprises. Unlike the Hirshes' high-styled house at 824 West Franklin (Figure 9), Younger's residence was a conservative, three-story townhouse on a side-hall plan, with a projecting

polygonal bay. The facade was red pressed brick (prior to being painted white), with rock-faced granite lintels and belt-courses. The original roof and cornice treatment is unknown due to a remodeling in 1904, but the Younger house appears to have entailed a modicum of Richardsonian Romanesque detail. S.D Crenshaw, chemical mogul, hired Noland and Baskervill to update the house in 1904. The copper Greek Doric cornice and cresting (Figure 40) was added by Noland and Baskervill. A Greek Doric limestone portico was also added at this time.

**The interior** contains some excellent woodwork and tiles. The rear smoking room, added by Noland and Baskervill in 1904, consists of walls of clear leaded glass. Not handicapped accessible.



Anderson-Valentine House  
920 West Franklin Street



**Original Owner:**  
Mary Pegram Anderson

**Date:** 1893-1894

**Architect:**  
Benjamin W. Poindexter, RVA

**Designed by young Richmond architect** Benjamin West Poindexter who was in partnership with Charles K. Bryant at the time, 920 West Franklin Street was built as a three-bay-wide, two-and-one-half-story house on a side-hall plan. A front gambrel rimmed in copper is set against a flat copper-clad roof. The facade is of beige pressed brick with brownstone details, including a full-width one story porch supported by paired colonnettes with Sullivanesque cushion capitals. The second floor round-topped windows are surmounted by brownstone

keystones. At the third floor level is a Palladian window of carved stone, with a carved stone fan in place of a fanlight. The window is flanked by carved paterae motifs, also contained at the apex of the gable.

Mary Pegram Anderson was the second wife and widow of Joseph R. Anderson of Tredegar Iron Works. Mrs. Anderson had been known and well respected as Miss Pegram prior to her marriage in the early 1880s. Mrs. Anderson purchased the property at 920 West Franklin in December 1892. In November, she had sold the Anderson House at 113 West Franklin Street to Lewis Ginter. Ginter acquired the Anderson house at 113 West Franklin in order to erect the Jefferson Hotel in its place. The hotel, designed by New York firm Carrere and Hastings, was opened in 1895. Mary Pegram Anderson spent 1893 in residence at 1007 West Grace Street while her house at 920 West Franklin was under construction. Mrs. Anderson moved in to her new home in 1894.

Putney-Kearny House  
921 West Franklin Street



**Original Owner:** Stephen Putney

**Date:** 1894

**Architect:** Albert F. Hunt, RVA

**The local architect Albert F. Hunt** was commissioned to design a townhouse in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Like many of his neighbors, Stephen Putney's house was built on a side-hall plan, and had a projecting semi-circular tower. Stonework for the imposing structure was executed by William Mason, of the partnership Mason & Sim, Richmond, Virginia. The dark brownstone was laid in alternating smooth and rock-faced bands. The solid stone arches of the porch have small floral roundels carved in relief. The arched openings are spanned with wrought iron grilles. A Palladian window was also incorporated into the facade, indicating the diversification of influences on local architects.

Stephen Putney made his fortune

in the wholesale shoe business. Putney lived in a large antebellum house in the Court End section of Richmond until buying property at 921 West Franklin Street. Putney purchased the land from Ella Williams (of 816) in May, 1894, and from Charlotte and James Kearney in June of the same year.

**The interior of Putney's house** includes a series of art glass transoms over the parlor windows. Much of the original interior detailing has been painted over or otherwise altered, but could be reclaimed. An inappropriate polished-marble vestibule floor was laid sometime in the past two years that clashes with the muted tones of the matte tile of the porch and the somber effect of the ponderous stonework.

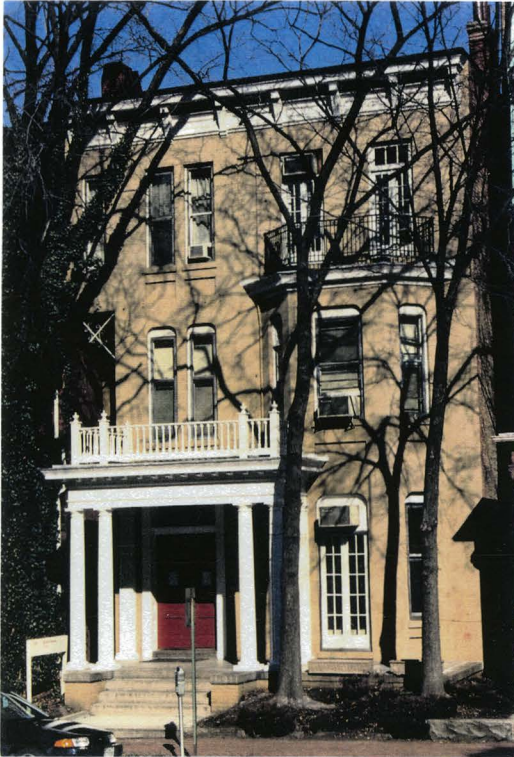


Grant-Buford House  
922 West Franklin Street

**Original Owner:** Percival S. Grant

**Date:** 1888-1889

**Architect:** Albert L. West, RVA



**Buford House**, one of the so-called Italianate houses of the 900 block of West Franklin Street (cf Bowe house) retains little to indicate its fitness in this street of elegant homes. The three story brick house bears evidence of alterations to exterior, including the probable removal of a portico and surround and replacement with a larger portico with Doric columns, modillion balustrade. The house is brick, three stories in height, with a two-story projecting polygonal bay with balcony. The original effect of contrasting lintels against brickwork has been lost under mustard-yellow paint. The lintels/crowns exhibit a peaked form on the first floor, wrap around the windows of the second, and

are simple flat rectangular blocks on the third. The cornice consists of simple brackets. An odd overhang on third floor extends over a void, behind which is the stair tower. this might be evidence of a later alteration.

**The interior** has been thoroughly altered and oak woodwork is hidden under several layers (seven to nine in some places) of thick flaking paint. The front office on the first floor, accessed by pocket doors, retains large chimney piece with floral motifs in shallow relief and paired stubby columns on each side. The fireplace is framed with orange and beige glazed tile.

This house is the near-twin of a house at 2 West Franklin Street, designed by Albert L. West and built for Robert Boshier in 1886. 922 West Franklin Street was built for clerk Percival S. Grant. It was occupied by C.P. Stokes, of 805 West Franklin Street, as soon as 1892.

Berkeley Apartments  
Scherer Hall  
**923 West Franklin  
Street**



**Original Owner:** Caroline C. Wise / Berkeley Apartments

**Date:** 1910

**Architect:**  
Noland and Baskervill, RVA

**Noland and Baskervill's** 1909 drawings for the Berkeley Apartments indicate that the original building was only to rise three stories in keeping with the scale of its immediate neighbors. (It is not yet known when or why the plans were modified.) As it was built, the three bay wide, brick Colonial Revival building at 923 West Franklin Street rises five stories at the corner of Franklin and Harrison. The rusticated first

floor is capped with a molded brick belt course, above which rises three floors accented with brick quoins; another belt course runs between the fourth and fifth floors. The 12/1 hung windows are surmounted by keystoneed limestone jack arches, and the entablature consists of a dentil frieze and modillion cornice. The portico, with its full entablature and dentil cornice, is supported by four ionic columns and fluted pilasters; A balustrade atop the portico is fashioned out of overlapping circles and square recessed-panel supports. Other notable exterior features are the wrought iron balconies on the west side of the building.

**The interior of the building** has been entirely "modernized" and retains none of its original character. There are remnants of pilasters in the entry hall, but the ceilings have been lowered cutting off the segmental arches that would have accompanied them. The old elevator cage also remains in its shaft, though it has been welded shut as a precautionary measure.

The Berkeley Apartments was the fourth apartment house on West Franklin, following the much larger Chesterfield (901 West Franklin Street; Muhlenberg Brothers with Noland and Baskervill, 1902), Raleigh (1001 West Franklin Street; Aubrey Chesterman, 1907) and Gresham Court Apartments (1030 West Franklin Street; Carneal & Johnston Architects, 1909).

**APPENDIX B:**

**Chronology of Development  
800-932 West Franklin Street**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Name/Street Number</b>	<b>Dominant Style</b>
1855; 1903-10	Ritter Hickok, 821	built as Italianate Villa Remodeled as Colonial Revival
ca. 1855	Taylor, 827	unknown/ <b>demolished ca. 1883</b>
(unknown date)	Dickinson-Gravatt, 900	unknown/ <b>demolished ca. 1900</b>
(unknown date)	Williams-Berry, 816 (812-14)	Italianate/ <b>demolished ca. 1924</b>
1871	Ordway-Skinker, 801	Second Empire/ <b>destroyed 1997</b>
ca. 1880; ca. 1890	Montague, 811	2nd Empire/ Rich. Rom./ <b>dem 1950s</b>
1881-1883	Blanchard-White, 806	Second Empire
ca. 1884	Goode, 815	Second Empire/ <b>demolished 20C.</b>
1883-1885	Saunders-Founder's Hall, 827	Sec. Emp w/Greek & Gothic detail
1885; 1902	Starke, 915	mixed
1886	Gunn-Bird, 820	Second Empire
ca. 1887	C.P. Stokes, 805	Richardsonian Rom./ <b>dem. 1950s</b>
1887	Ellett, 807	Richardsonian Rom./ <b>dem. 1950s</b>
ca. 1887; ca 1893	Nash, 809	Sec. Emp; Rich. Rom./ <b>dem. 1950s</b>
1887	Dunlop-Harrison, 816	Queen Anne
ca. 1887-1888	Barksdale, 813	Richardsonian Rom/ <b>dem 1950s</b>
1887-1888	Bowe, 917	Italianate
1888-	Ginter begun , 901	Richardsonian Romanesque
1888-1889	Stokes, 918	mixed
1888-1889	Grant-Buford, 922	Italianate
1889-1891	Hirsh-Williams, 824	Richardsonian Rom./ <b>dem. 1937</b>
1891	Stagg, 912	Richardsonian Romanesque & Gothic

1891	McAdams, 914	Richardsonian Romanesque & Gothic
1891; 1904	Younger-Crenshaw, 919	mixed/Greek Doric detailing
1891/2	Ginter Completed, 901	Richardsonian Romanesque
1891-1894	Hirsh-Millhiser, 916	Richardsonian Romanesque & Exotic
1892	Strause-Blanton, 826	Richardsonian Rom. & Chateausque
ca. 1892	Gordon-Moore, 819	Richardsonian Romanesque
1893-1894	Buek-Thurston, 808	American Renaissance & Chateausque
1893-1894	Anderson, 920	Mixed
ca. 1893	Parkinson, 906	Richardsonian Rom./ <b>dem. 20C</b>
ca. 1893	924-30 (private)	Richardsonian Romanesque
ca. 1893	Whitehurst, 932 (private)	Richardsonian Romanesque
ca. 1893	Robinson, 818 (private)	Colonial Revival
1894-1896	Allison-President's	Colonial Revival
1894	Putney-Kearney, 921	Richardsonian Romanesque
1902	The Chesterfield, 900	Italianate/American Renaissance
1907-08; 1914	Myers-Anderson, 913	Colonial Revival
1908-1911	Scott-Bocock, 909	American Renaissance
1910	Berkeley Apts-Scherer 923	Colonial Revival
1912-1915	Monroe Terrace-Johnson, 801	Gothic detailing
1914-1916	Hunton, 810	American Renaissance
ca. 1925	Franklin Terrace, 812-14	Spanish Eclectic

**APPENDIX C:**  
**Architect-attributed Buildings**

<b>Address</b>	<b>Architect</b>	<b>City</b>
800	M.J. Dimmock	Richmond, Virginia
801	Alfred C. Bossom	New York City
807 (demolished)	M.J. Dimmock	Richmond, Virginia
808	Peter Lauritsen	New York City
810	Noland and Baskervill	Richmond, Virginia
824 (demolished)	Attributed to William M. Poindexter	Washington, D.C.
826	Charles H. Read, Jr.	Richmond, Virginia
900	Muhlenburg Bros. Noland and Baskervill	Reading, Pennsylvania Richmond, Virginia
901	Harvey L. Page	Washington, D.C.
908-10	Griffin and Randall	New York City
909	Noland and Baskervill	Richmond, Virginia
912	Albert L. West	Richmond, Virginia
913	Noland and Baskervill	Richmond, Virginia
914	Albert L. West	Richmond, Virginia
916	William M. Poindexter	Washington, D.C.
918	Attributed to Carl Ruehrmund	Richmond, Virginia
920	Benjamin W. Poindexter	Richmond, Virginia
922	Attributed to Albert L. West	Richmond, Virginia
923	Noland and Baskervill	Richmond Virginia

## **APPENDIX D:**

### **Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation**



## REHABILITATION

*is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.*

### STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials.

### REHABILITATION AS A TREATMENT.

*When repair and replacement of deteriorated features are necessary; when alterations or additions to the property are planned for a new or continued use; and when its depiction at a particular period of time is not appropriate, Rehabilitation may be considered as a treatment. Prior to undertaking work, a documentation plan for Rehabilitation should be developed.*

Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to

historic materials will not be used.

8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.